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A GLEAMING COHORT

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

CHARLES DICKENS
THE BALLAD OF THE WHITE HORSE
ALL THINGS CONSIDERED
TREMENDOUS TRIFLES
ALARMS AND DISCURSIONS
A MISCELLANY OF MEN
THE USES OF DIVERSITY
FANCIES VERSUS FADS
THE FLYING INN
WINE, WATER AND SONG
A SHILLING FOR MY THOUGHTS
THE OUTLINE OF SANITY

A GLEAMING COHORT

BEING SELECTIONS FROM
THE WRITINGS OF

G. K. CHESTERTON



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PREFACE

THIS collection has been compiled from the following books: "Charles Dickens," "All Things Considered," "Tremendous Trifles," "Alarms and Discursions," "The Ballad of the White Horse," "A Miscellany of Men," "The Flying Inn," "Wine, Water and Song," "The Uses of Diversity," and "Fancies versus Fads," all published by Messrs. Methuen & Co.

The selection has been made by MR. E. V. LUCAS.

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A GLEAMING COHORT

I. The Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds

THE other day on a stray spur of the Chiltern Hills I climbed up upon one of those high, abrupt, windy churchyards from which the dead seem to look down upon all the living. It was a mountain of ghosts as Olympus was a mountain of gods. In that church lay the bones of great Puritan lords, of a time when most of the power of England was Puritan, even of the Established Church. And below these uplifted bones lay the huge and hollow valleys of the English countryside, where the motors went by every now and then like meteors, where stood out in white squares and oblongs in the chequered forest many of the country seats even of those same families now dulled with wealth or decayed with Toryism. And looking over that deep green prospect on that luminous yellow evening, a lovely and austere thought came into my mind, a thought as beautiful as the green wood and as grave as the tombs. The thought was this: that I should like to go into Parliament, quarrel with my party, accept the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds, and then refuse to give it up.

We are so proud in England of our crazy constitutional anomalies that I fancy that very few readers indeed will need to be told about the Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds. But in case there should be here or there one happy man who has never heard of such twisted tomfooleries, I will rapidly remind you what

this legal fiction is. As it is quite a voluntary, sometimes even an eager, affair to get into Parliament, you would naturally suppose that it would be also a voluntary matter to get out again. You would think your fellow-members would be indifferent, or even relieved to see you go; especially as (by another exercise of the shrewd, illogical old English common sense) they have carefully built the room too small for the people who have to sit in it. But not so, my pippins, as it says in the "Iliad." If you are merely a member of Parliament (Lord knows why) you can't resign. But if you are a Minister of the Crown (Lord knows why) you can. It is necessary to get into the Ministry in order to get out of the House; and they have to give you some office that doesn't exist or nobody else wants and thus unlock the door. So you go to the Prime Minister, concealing your air of fatigue, and say, "It has been the ambition of my life to be Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds." The Prime Minister then replies, "I can imagine no man more fitted both morally and mentally for that high office." He then gives it you, and you hurriedly leave, reflecting how the republics of the Continent reel anarchically to and fro for lack of a little solid English directness and simplicity.

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Now, the thought that struck me like a thunderbolt as I sat on the Chiltern slope was that I would like to get the Prime Minister to give me the Chiltern Hundreds, and then startle and disturb him by showing the utmost interest in my work. I should profess a general knowledge of my duties, but wish to be instructed in the details. I should ask to see the Under-Steward and the Under-Under-Steward, and all the fine staff of experienced permanent officials who are the glory of this department. And, indeed,

my enthusiasm would not be wholly unreal. For as far as I can recollect the original duties of a Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds were to put down the outlaws and brigands in that part of the world. Well, there are a great many outlaws and brigands in that part of the world still, and though their methods have so largely altered as to require a corresponding alteration in the tactics of the Steward, I do not see why an energetic and public-spirited Steward should not nab them yet.

For the robbers have not vanished from the old high forests to the west of the great city. The thieves have not vanished; they have grown so large that they are invisible. You do not see the word "Asia" written across a map of that neighbourhood; nor do you see the word "Thief" written across the countrysides of England; though it is really written in equally large letters. I know men governing despotically great stretches of that country, whose every step in life has been such that a slip would have sent them to Dartmoor; but they trod along the high hard wall between right and wrong, the wall as sharp as a sword-edge, as softly and craftily and lightly as a cat. The vastness of their silent violence itself obscured what they were at; if they seem to stand for the rights of property it is really because they have so often invaded them. And if they do not break the laws, it is only because they make them.

.

But after all we only need a Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds who really understands cats and thieves. Men hunt one animal differently from another; and the rich could catch swindlers as dexterously as they catch otters or antlered deer if they were really at all keen upon doing it. But then they never have an uncle with antlers; nor a personal friend who is an

otter. When some of the great lords that lie in the churchyard behind me went out against their foes in those deep woods beneath I wager that they had bows against the bows of the outlaws, and spears against the spears of the robber knights. They knew what they were about; they fought the evil-doers of their age with the weapons of their age. If the same common sense were applied to commercial law, in forty-eight hours it would be all over with the American Trusts and the African forward finance. But it will not be done: for the governing class either does not care, or cares very much, for the criminals; and as for me, I had a delusive opportunity of being Constable of Beaconsfield (with grossly inadequate powers), but I fear I shall never really be Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds.

II. Cheese

MY forthcoming work in five volumes, "The Neglect of Cheese in European Literature," is a work of such unprecedented and laborious detail that it is doubtful if I shall live to finish it. Some overflowings from such a fountain of information may therefore be permitted to sprinkle these pages. I cannot yet wholly explain the neglect to which I refer. Poets have been mysteriously silent on the subject of cheese. Virgil, if I remember right, refers to it several times, but with too much Roman restraint. He does not let himself go on cheese. The only other poet I can think of just now who seems to have had some sensibility on the point was the nameless author of the nursery rhyme which says: "If all the trees were bread and cheese"—which is, indeed, a rich and gigantic vision of the higher gluttony. If all the trees were bread and cheese, there would be considerable deforestation in any part of England where I was living. Wild and wide woodlands would reel and fade before me as rapidly as they ran after Orpheus. Except Virgil and this anonymous rhymer, I can recall no verse about cheese. Yet it has every quality which we require in exalted poetry. It is a short, strong word; it rhymes to "breeze" and "seas" (an essential point); that it is emphatic in sound is admitted even by the civilization of the modern cities. For their citizens, with no apparent intention except emphasis, will often say, "Cheese it!" or even "Quite the cheese." The substance itself is imaginative. It is

ancient—sometimes in the individual case, always in the type and custom. It is simple, being directly derived from milk, which is one of the ancestral drinks, not lightly to be corrupted with soda-water. You know, I hope (though I myself have only just thought of it), that the four rivers of Eden were milk, water, wine, and ale. Aerated waters only appeared after the Fall.

But cheese has another quality, which is also the very soul of song. Once in endeavouring to lecture in several places at once, I made an eccentric journey across England, a journey of so irregular and even illogical shape that it necessitated my having lunch on four successive days in four roadside inns in four different counties. In each inn they had nothing but bread and cheese; nor can I imagine why a man should want more than bread and cheese, if he can get enough of it. In each inn the cheese was good; and in each inn it was different. There was a noble Wensleydale cheese in Yorkshire, a Cheshire cheese in Cheshire, and so on. Now, it is just here that true poetic civilization differs from that paltry and mechanical civilization which holds us all in bondage. Bad customs are universal and rigid, like modern militarism. Good customs are universal and varied, like native chivalry and self-defence. Both the good and bad civilization cover us as with a canopy, and protect us from all that is outside. But a good civilization spreads over us freely like a tree, varying and yielding because it is alive. A bad civilization stands up and sticks out above us like an umbrella—artificial, mathematical in shape; not merely universal, but uniform. So it is with the contrast between the substances that vary and the substances that are the same wherever they penetrate. By a wise doom of heaven men were commanded to eat cheese, but not the same cheese. Being really

universal it varies from valley to valley. But if, let us say, we compare cheese with soap (that vastly inferior substance), we shall see that soap tends more and more to be merely Smith's Soap or Brown's Soap, sent automatically all over the world. If the Red Indians have soap it is Smith's Soap. If the Grand Lama has soap it is Brown's Soap. There is nothing subtly and strangely Buddhist, nothing tenderly Tibetan, about his soap. I fancy the Grand Lama does not eat cheese (he is not worthy), but if he does it is probably a local cheese, having some real relation to his life and outlook. Safety matches, tinned foods, patent medicines are sent all over the world; but they are not produced all over the world. Therefore there is in them a mere dead identity, never that soft play of slight variation which exists in things produced everywhere out of the soil, in the milk of the kine, or the fruits of the orchard. You can get a whisky and soda at every outpost of the Empire: that is why so many Empire-builders go mad. But you are not tasting or touching any environment, as in the cider of Devonshire or the grapes of the Rhine. You are not approaching Nature in one of her myriad tints of mood, as in the holy act of eating cheese.

When I had done my pilgrimage in the four wayside public-houses I reached one of the great northern cities, and there I proceeded, with great rapidity and complete inconsistency, to a large and elaborate restaurant, where I knew I could get many other things besides bread and cheese. I could get that also, however; or at least I expected to get it; but I was sharply reminded that I had entered Babylon, and left England behind. The waiter brought me cheese, indeed, but cheese cut up into contemptibly small pieces, and it is the awful fact that, instead of Christian bread, he brought me biscuits. Biscuits—to one who had eaten the cheese of four great country-

sides! Biscuits—to one who had proved anew for himself the sanctity of the ancient wedding between cheese and bread! I addressed the waiter in warm and moving terms. I asked him who he was that he should put asunder those whom Humanity had joined. I asked him if he did not feel, as an artist, that a solid but yielding substance like cheese went naturally with a solid, yielding substance like bread; to eat it off biscuits is like eating it off slates. I asked him if, when he said his prayers, he was so supercilious as to pray for his daily biscuits. He gave me generally to understand that he was only obeying a custom of Modern Society. I have therefore resolved to raise my voice, not against the waiter, but against Modern Society, for this huge and unparalleled modern wrong.

III. The Romance of Rhyme

THE poet in the comic opera, it will be remembered (I hope), claimed for his æsthetic authority that "Hey diddle diddle will rank as an idyll, if I pronounce it chaste." In face of a satire which still survives the fashion it satirized, it may require some moral courage seriously to pronounce it chaste, or to suggest that the nursery rhyme in question has really some of the qualities of an idyll. Of its chastity, in the vulgar sense, there need be little dispute, despite the scandal of the elopement of the dish with the spoon, which would seem as free from grossness as the loves of the triangles. And though the incident of the cow may have something of the moonstruck ecstasy of Endymion, that also has a silvery coldness about it worthy of the wilder aspects of Diana. The truth more seriously tenable is that this nursery rhyme is a complete and compact model of the nursery short story. The cow jumping over the moon fulfils to perfection the two essentials of such a story for children. It makes an effect that is fantastic out of objects that are familiar; and it makes a picture that is at once incredible and unmistakable. But it is yet more tenable, and here more to the point, that this nursery rhyme is emphatically a rhyme. Both the lilt and the jingle are just right for their purpose, and are worth whole libraries of elaborate literary verse for children. And the best proof of its vitality is that the satirist himself has unconsciously echoed the jingle even in making the joke. The metre of that nineteenth-century satire

is the metre of the nursery rhyme. "Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle" and "Hey diddle diddle will rank as an idyll" are obviously both dancing to the same ancient tune; and that by no means the tune the old cow died of, but the more exhilarating air to which she jumped over the moon.

The whole history of the thing called rhyme can be found between those two things: the simple pleasure of rhyming "diddle" to "fiddle," and the more sophisticated pleasure of rhyming "diddle" to "idyll." Now the fatal mistake about poetry, and more than half of the fatal mistake about humanity, consists in forgetting that we should have the first kind of pleasure as well as the second. It might be said that we should have the first pleasure as the basis of the second; or yet more truly, the first pleasure inside the second. The fatal metaphor of progress, which means leaving things behind us, has utterly obscured the real idea of growth, which means leaving things inside us. The heart of the tree remains the same, however many rings are added to it; and a man cannot leave his heart behind by running hard with his legs. In the core of all culture are the things that may be said, in every sense, to be learned by heart. In the innermost part of all poetry is the nursery rhyme, the nonsense that is too happy even to care about being nonsensical. It may lead on to the more elaborate nonsense of the Gilbertian line, or even the far less poetic nonsense of some of the Browningesque rhymes. But the true enjoyment of poetry is always in having the simple pleasure as well as the subtle pleasure. Indeed it is on this primary point that so many of our artistic and other reforms seem to go wrong. What is the matter with the modern world is that it is trying to get simplicity in everything except the soul. Where the soul really has simplicity it can be grateful for

anything—even complexity. Many peasants have to be vegetarians, and their ordinary life is really a simple life. But the peasants do not despise a good dinner when they can get it; they wolf it down with enthusiasm, because they have not only the simple life but the simple spirit. And it is so with the modern modes of art which revert, very rightly, to what is "primitive." But their moral mistake is that they try to combine the ruggedness that should belong to simplicity with a superciliousness that should only belong to satiety. The last Futurist draughtsmanship, for instance, evidently has the aim of drawing a tree as it might be drawn by a child of ten. I think the new artists would admit it; nor do I merely sneer at it. I am willing to admit, especially for the sake of argument, that there is a truth of philosophy and psychology in this attempt to attain the clarity even through the crudity of childhood. In this sense I can see what a man is driving at when he draws a tree merely as a stick with smaller sticks standing out of it. He may be trying to trace in black and white or grey a primeval and almost prenatal illumination; that it is very remarkable that a stick should exist, and still more remarkable that a stick should stick up or stick out. He may be similarly enchanted with his own stick of charcoal or grey chalk; he may be enraptured, as a child is, with the mere fact that it makes a mark on the paper—a highly poetic fact in itself. But the child does not despise the real tree for being different from his drawing of the tree. He does not despise Uncle Humphrey because that talented amateur can really draw a tree. He does not think less of the real sticks because they are live sticks, and can grow and branch and curve in a way uncommon in walking-sticks. Because he has a single eye he can enjoy a double pleasure. This distinction, which seems strangely

neglected, may be traced again in the drama and most other domains of art. Reformers insist that the audiences of simpler ages were content with bare boards or rudimentary scenery if they could hear Sophocles or Shakespeare talking a language of the gods. They were very properly contented with plain boards. But they were not discontented with pageants. The people who appreciated Antony's oration as such would have appreciated Aladdin's palace as such. They did not think gilding and spangles substitutes for poetry and philosophy, because they are not. But they did think gilding and spangles great and admirable gifts of God, because they are.

But the application of this distinction here is to the case of rhyme in poetry. And the application of it is that we should never be ashamed of enjoying a thing as a rhyme as well as enjoying it as a poem. And I think the modern poets who try to escape from the rhyming pleasure, in pursuit of a freer poetical pleasure, are making the same fundamentally fallacious attempt to combine simplicity with superiority. Such a poet is like a child who could take no pleasure in a tree because it looked like a tree, or a playgoer who could take no pleasure in the Forest of Arden because it looked like a forest. It is not impossible to find a sort of prig who professes that he could listen to literature in any scenery, but strongly objects to good scenery. And in poetical criticism and creation there has also appeared the prig who insists that any new poem must avoid the sort of melody that makes the beauty of any old song. Poets must put away childish things, including the child's pleasure in the mere sing-song of irrational rhyme. It may be hinted that when poets put away childish things they will put away poetry. But it may be well to say a word in further justification of rhyme as well as poetry, in

the child as well as the poet. Now, the neglect of this nursery instinct would be a blunder, even if it were merely an animal instinct or an automatic instinct. If a rhyme were to a man merely what a bark is to a dog, or a crow to a cock, it would be clear that such natural things cannot be merely neglected. It is clear that a canine epic, about Argus instead of Ulysses, would have a beat ultimately consisting of barks. It is clear that a long poem like "Chantecler," written by a real cock, would be to the tune of Cock-a-doodle-doo. But in truth the nursery rhyme has a nobler origin; if it be ancestral it is not animal; its principle is a primary one, not only in the body but in the soul.

Milton prefaced "Paradise Lost" with a ponderous condemnation of rhyme. And perhaps the finest and even the most familiar line in the whole of "Paradise Lost" is really a glorification of rhyme. "Seasons return, but not to me return," is not only *an* echo that has all the ring of rhyme in its form, but it happens to contain nearly all the philosophy of rhyme in its spirit. The wonderful word "return" has, not only in its sound but in its sense, a hint of the whole secret of song. It is not merely that its very form is a fine example of a certain quality in English, somewhat similar to that which Mrs. Meynell admirably analysed in one of her last beautiful essays, in the case of words like "unforgiven." It is that it describes poetry itself, not only in a mechanical but a moral sense. Song is not only a recurrence, it is a return. It does not merely, like the child in the nursery, take pleasure in seeing the wheels go round. It also wishes to go back as well as round; to go back to the nursery where such pleasures are found. Or to vary the metaphor slightly, it does not merely rejoice in the rotation of a wheel on the road, as if it were a fixed wheel in the air. It is not only the wheel

but the wagon that is returning. That labouring caravan is always travelling towards some camping-ground that it has lost and cannot find again. No lover of poetry needs to be told that all poems are full of that noise of returning wheels; and none more than the poems of Milton himself. The whole truth is obvious, not merely in the poem, but even in the two words of the title. All poems might be bound in one book under the title of "Paradise Lost." And the only object of writing "Paradise Lost" is to turn it, if only by a magic and momentary illusion, into "Paradise Regained."

It is in this deeper significance of return that we must seek for the peculiar power in the recurrence we call rhyme. It would be easy enough to reply to Milton's strictures on rhyme in the spirit of a sensible if superficial liberality by saying that it takes all sorts to make a world, and especially the world of the poets. It is evident enough that Milton might have been right to dispense with rhyme without being right to despise it. It is obvious that the peculiar dignity of his religious epic would have been weakened if it had been a rhymed epic, beginning:

> Of man's first disobedience and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree whose mortal root.

But it is equally obvious that Milton himself would not have tripped on the light fantastic toe with quite so much charm and cheerfulness in the lines:

> But come thou Goddess fair and free
> In heaven yclept Euphrosyne

if the goddess had been yclept something else, as, for the sake of argument, Syrinx. Milton in his more reasonable moods would have allowed rhyme in theory a place in all poetry, as he allowed it in practice in

his own poetry. But he would certainly have said at this time, and possibly at all times, that he allowed it an inferior place, or at least a secondary place. But is its place secondary; and is it in any sense inferior?

The romance of rhyme does not consist merely in the pleasure of a jingle, though this is a pleasure of which no man should be ashamed. Certainly most men take pleasure in it, whether or not they are ashamed of it. We see it in the older fashion of prolonging the chorus of a song with syllables like "rumty tumty" or "tooral looral." We see it in the similar but later fashion of discussing whether a truth is objective or subjective, or whether a reform is constructive or destructive, or whether an argument is deductive or inductive: all bearing witness to a very natural love for those nursery rhyme recurrences which make a sort of song without words, or at least without any kind of intellectual significance. But something much deeper is involved in the love of rhyme as distinct from other poetic forms, something which is perhaps too deep and subtle to be described. The nearest approximation to the truth I can think of is something like this: that while all forms of genuine verse recur, there is in rhyme a sense of return to exactly the same place. All modes of song go forward and backward like the tides of the sea; but in the great sea of Homeric or Virgilian hexameters, the sea that carried the labouring ships of Ulysses and Æneas, the thunder of the breakers is rhythmic, but the margin of the foam is necessarily irregular and vague. In rhyme there is rather a sense of water poured safely into one familiar well, or (to use a nobler metaphor) of ale poured safely into one familiar flagon. The armies of Homer and Virgil advance and retreat over a vast country, and suggest vast and very profound sentiments about it, about

whether it is their own country or only a strange country. But when the old nameless ballad boldly rhymes " the bonny ivy tree " to " my ain countree " the vision at once dwindles and sharpens to a very vivid image of a single soldier passing under the ivy that darkens his own door. Rhythm deals with similarity, but rhyme with identity. Now in the one word identity are involved perhaps the deepest and certainly the dearest human things. He who is home-sick does not desire houses or even homes. He who is love-sick does not want to see all the women with whom he might have fallen in love. Only he who is sea-sick, perhaps, may be said to have a cosmopolitan craving for all lands or any kind of land. And this is probably why sea-sickness, like cosmopolitanism, has never yet been a high inspiration to song.

Songs, especially the most poignant of them, generally refer to some absolute, to some positive place or person for whom no similarity is a substitute. In such a case all approximation is merely asymptotic. The prodigal returns to his father's house and not the house next door, unless he is still an imperfectly sober prodigal. The lover desires his lady and not her twin sister, except in old complications of romance. And even the spiritualist is generally looking for a ghost and not merely for ghosts. I think the intolerable torture of spiritualism must be a doubt about identity. Anyhow, it will generally be found that where this call for the identical has been uttered most ringingly and unmistakably in literature, it has been uttered in rhyme. Another purpose for which this pointed and definite form is very much fitted is the expression of dogma, as distinct from doubt or even opinion. This is why, with all allowance for a decline in the most classical effects of the classical tongue, the rhymed Latin of the

mediæval hymns does express what it had to express in a very poignant poetical manner, as compared with the reverent agnosticism so nobly uttered in the rolling unrhymed metres of the ancients. For even if we regard the matter of the mediæval verses as a dream, it was at least a vivid dream, a dream full of faces, a dream of love and of lost things. And something of the same spirit runs in a vaguer way through proverbs and phrases that are not exactly religious, but rather in a rude sense philosophical, but which all move with the burden of returning; things to be felt only in familiar fragments . . . *on revient toujours* . . . it's the old story . . . it's love that makes the world go round; and all roads lead to Rome: we might almost say that all roads lead to Rhyme.

Milton's revolt against rhyme must be read in the light of history. Milton is the Renaissance frozen into a Puritan form; the beginning of a period which was in a sense classic, but was in a still more definite sense aristocratic. There the Classicist was the artistic aristocrat because the Calvinist was the spiritual aristocrat. The seventeenth century was intensely individualistic; it had both in the noble and the ignoble sense a respect for persons. It had no respect whatever for popular traditions; and it was in the midst of its purely logical and legal excitement that most of the popular traditions died. The Parliament appeared and the people disappeared. The arts were put under patrons, where they had once been under patron saints. The English schools and colleges at once strengthened and narrowed the New Learning, making it something rather peculiar to one country and one class. A few men talked a great deal of good Latin, where all men had once talked a little bad Latin. But they talked even the good Latin so that no Latinist in the world could understand them.

They confined all study of the classics to that of the most classical period, and grossly exaggerated the barbarity and barrenness of patristic Greek or mediæval Latin. It is as if a man said that because the English translation of the Bible is perhaps the best English in the world, therefore Addison and Pater and Newman are not worth reading. We can imagine what men in such a mood would have said of the rude rhymed hexameters of the monks; and it is not unnatural that they should have felt a reaction against rhyme itself. For the history of rhyme is the history of something else, very vast and sometimes invisible, certainly somewhat indefinable, against which they were in aristocratic rebellion.

That thing is difficult to define in impartial modern terms. It might well be called Romance, and that even in a more technical sense, since it corresponds to the rise of the Romance languages as distinct from the Roman language. It might more truly be called Religion, for historically it was the gradual re-emergence of Europe through the Dark Ages, because it still had one religion, though no longer one rule. It was, in short, the creation of Christendom. It may be called Legend, for it is true that the most overpowering presence in it is that of omnipresent and powerful popular Legend; so that things that may never have happened, or, as some say, could never have happened, are nevertheless rooted in our racial memory like things that have happened to ourselves. The whole Arthurian Cycle, for instance, seems something more real than reality. If the faces in that darkness of the Dark Ages, Lancelot and Arthur and Merlin and Modred, are indeed faces in a dream, they are like faces in a real dream: a dream in a bed and not a dream in a book. Subconsciously at least, I should be much less surprised if Arthur was to come

again than I should be if the Superman were to come at all. Again, the thing might be called Gossip: a noble name, having in it the name of God and one of the most generous and genial of the relations of men. For I suppose there has seldom been a time when such a mass of culture and good traditions of craft and song have been handed down orally, by one universal buzz of conversation, through centuries of ignorance down to centuries of greater knowledge. Education must have been an eternal *viva voce* examination; but the men passed their examination. At least they went out in such rude sense masters of art as to create the Song of Roland and the round Roman arches that carry the weight of so many Gothic towers. Finally, of course, it can be called ignorance, barbarism, black superstition, a reaction towards obscurantism and old night; and such a view is eminently complete and satisfactory, only that it leaves behind it a sort of weak wonder as to why the very youngest poets do still go on writing poems about the sword of Arthur and the horn of Roland.

All this was but the beginning of a process which has two great points of interest. The first is the way in which the mediæval movement did rebuild the old Roman civilization; the other was the way in which it did not. A strange interest attaches to the things which had never existed in the pagan culture and did appear in the Christian culture. I think it is true of most of them that they had a quality that can very approximately be described as popular, or perhaps as vulgar, as indeed we still talk of the languages which at that time liberated themselves from Latin as the vulgar tongues. And to many Classicists these things would appear to be vulgar in a more vulgar sense. They were vulgar in the sense of being vivid almost to excess, of making a very

direct and unsophisticated appeal to the emotions. The first law of heraldry was to wear the heart upon the sleeve. Such mediævalism was the reverse of mere mysticism, in the sense of mere mystery; it might more truly be described as sensationalism. One of these things, for instance, was a hot and even an impatient love of colour. It learned to paint before it could draw, and could afford the twopence coloured long before it could manage the penny plain. It culminated at last, of course, in the energy and gaiety of the Gothic; but even the richness of Gothic rested on a certain psychological simplicity. We can contrast it with the classic by noting its popular passion for telling a story in stone. We may admit that a Doric portico is a poem, but no one would describe it as an anecdote. The time was to come when much of the imagery of the cathedrals was to be lost; but it would have mattered the less that it was defaced by its enemies if it had not been already neglected by its friends. It would have mattered less if the whole tide of taste among the rich had not turned against the old popular masterpieces. The Puritans defaced them, but the Cavaliers did not truly defend them. The Cavaliers were also aristocrats of the new classical culture, and used the word Gothic in the sense of barbaric. For the benefit of the Teutonists we may note in parentheses that, if this phrase meant that Gothic was despised, it also meant that the Goths were despised. But when the Cavaliers came back, after the Puritan interregnum, they restored not in the style of Pugin but in the style of Wren. The very thing we call the Restoration, which was the restoration of King Charles, was also the restoration of St. Paul's. And it was a very modern restoration.

So far we might say that simple people do not like simple things. This is certainly true if we compare

the classic with these highly coloured things of mediævalism, or all the vivid visions which first began to glow in the night of the Dark Ages. Now one of these things was the romantic expedient called rhyme. And even in this, if we compare the two, we shall see something of the same paradox by which the simple like complexities and the complex like simplicities. The ignorant liked rich carvings and melodious and often ingenious rhymes. The learned liked bare walls and blank verse. But in the case of rhyme it is peculiarly difficult to define the double and yet very definite truth. It is difficult to define the sense in which rhyme is artificial and the sense in which it is simple. In truth it is simple because it is artificial. It is an artifice of the kind enjoyed by children and other poetic people; it is a toy. As a technical accomplishment it stands at the same distance from the popular experience as the old popular sports. Like swimming, like dancing, like drawing the bow, anybody can do it, but nobody can do it without taking the trouble to do it; and only a few can do it very well. In a hundred ways it was akin to that simple and even humble energy that made all the lost glory of the guilds. Thus their rhyme was useful as well as ornamental. It was not merely a melody but also a mnemonic; just as their towers were not merely trophies but beacons and belfries. In another aspect rhyme is akin to rhetoric, but of a very positive and emphatic sort: the coincidence of sound giving the effect of saying, "It is certainly so." Shakespeare realized this when he rounded off a fierce or romantic scene with a rhymed couplet. I know that some critics do not like this, but I think there is a moment when a drama ought to become a melodrama. Then there is a much older effect of rhyme that can only be called mystical, which may seem the very opposite of the utilitarian, and almost equally

remote from the rhetorical. Yet it shares with the former the tough texture of something not easily forgotten, and with the latter the touch of authority which is the aim of all oratory. The thing I mean may be found in the fact that so many of the old proverbial prophecies, from Merlin to Mother Shipton, were handed down in rhyme. It can be found in the very name of Thomas the Rhymer.

But the simplest way of putting this popular quality is in a single word: it is a song. Rhyme corresponds to a melody so simple that it goes straight like an arrow to the heart. It corresponds to a chorus so familiar and obvious that all men can join in it. I am not disturbed by the suggestion that such an arrow of song, when it hits the heart, may entirely miss the head. I am not concerned to deny that the chorus may sometimes be a drunken chorus, in which men have lost their heads to find their tongues. I am not defending but defining; I am trying to find words for a large but elusive distinction between certain things that are certainly poetry and certain other things which are also song. Of course it is only an accident that Horace opens his greatest series of odes by saying that he detests the profane populace and wishes to drive them from his temple of poetry. But it is the sort of accident that is almost an allegory. There is even a sense in which it has a practical side. When all is said, *could* a whole crowd of men sing the "Descende Cœlo," that noble ode, as a crowd can certainly sing the "Dies Irae," or for that matter "Down among the Dead Men"? Did Horace himself sing the Horatian odes in the sense in which Shakespeare could sing, or could hardly help singing, the Shakespearean songs? I do not know, having no kind of scholarship on these points. But I do not feel that it could have been at all the same thing; and my only purpose is to attempt a rude description

of that thing. Rhyme is consonant to the particular kind of song that can be a popular song, whether pathetic or passionate or comic; and Milton is entitled to his true distinction; nobody is likely to sing "Paradise Lost" as if it were a song of that kind. I have tried to suggest my sympathy with rhyme, in terms true enough to be accepted by the other side as expressing their antipathy for it. I have admitted that rhyme is a toy and even a trick, of the sort that delights children. I have admitted that every rhyme is a nursery rhyme. What I will never admit is that anyone who is too big for the nursery is big enough for the Kingdom of God, though the God were only Apollo.

A good critic should be like God in the great saying of a Scottish mystic. George Macdonald said that God was easy to please and hard to satisfy. That paradox is the poise of all good artistic appreciation. Without the first part of the paradox appreciation perishes, because it loses the power to appreciate. Good criticism, I repeat, combines the subtle pleasure in a thing being done well with the simple pleasure in it being done at all. It combines the pleasure of the scientific engineer in seeing how the wheels work together to a logical end with the pleasure of the baby in seeing the wheels go round. It combines the pleasure of the artistic draughtsman in the fact that his lines of charcoal, light and apparently loose, fall exactly right and in a perfect relation with the pleasure of the child in the fact that the charcoal makes marks of any kind on the paper. And in the same fashion it combines the critic's pleasure in a poem with the child's pleasure in a rhyme. The historical point about this kind of poetry, the rhymed romantic kind, is that it rose out of the Dark Ages with the whole of this huge popular power behind it, the human love of a song, a riddle, a proverb, a pun

or a nursery rhyme; the sing-song of innumerable children's games, the chorus of a thousand camp-fires and a thousand taverns. When poetry loses its link with all these people who are easily pleased it loses all its power of giving pleasure. When a poet looks down on a rhyme it is, I will not say as if he looked down on a daisy (which might seem possible to the more literal-minded), but rather as if he looked down on a lark because he had been up in a balloon. It is cutting away the very roots of poetry; it is revolting against nature because it is natural, against sunshine because it is bright, or mountains because they are high, or moonrise because it is mysterious. The freezing process began after the Reformation with a fastidious search for finer yet freer forms; to-day it has ended in formlessness.

But the joke of it is that even when it is formless it is still fastidious. The new anarchic artists are not ready to accept everything. They are not ready to accept anything except anarchy. Unless it observes the very latest conventions of unconventionality, they would rule out anything classic as coldly as any classic ever ruled out anything romantic. But the classic was a form; and there was even a time when it was a new form. The men who invented Sapphics did invent a new metre; the introduction of Elizabethan blank verse was a real revolution in literary form. But *vers libre*, or nine-tenths of it, is not a new metre any more than sleeping in a ditch is a new school of architecture. It is no more a revolution in literary form than eating meat raw is an innovation in cookery. It is not even original, because it is not creative; the artist does not invent anything, but only abolishes something. But the only point about it that is to my present purpose is expressed in the word "pride." It is not merely proud in the sense of being exultant, but proud in the sense of

being disdainful. Such outlaws are more exclusive than aristocrats; and their anarchical arrogance goes far beyond the pride of Milton and the aristocrats of the New Learning. And this final refinement has completed the work which the saner aristocrats began, the work now most evident in the world: the separation of art from the people. I need not insist on the sensational and self-evident character of that separation. I need not recommend the modern poet to attempt to sing his *vers libres* in a public-house. I need not even urge the young Imagist to read out a number of his disconnected Images to a public meeting. The thing is not only admitted but admired. The old artist remained proud in spite of his unpopularity; the new artist is proud because of his unpopularity; perhaps it is his chief ground for pride.

Dwelling as I do in the Dark Ages, or at latest among the mediæval fairy-tales, I am yet moved to remember something I once read in a modern fairy-tale. As it happens, I have already used the name of George Macdonald; and in the best of his books there is a description of how a young miner in the mountains could always drive away the subterranean goblins if he could remember and repeat any kind of rhyme. The impromptu rhymes were often doggerel, as was the dog-Latin of many monkish hexameters or the burden of many rude Border ballads. But I have a notion that they drove away the devils, blue devils of pessimism and black devils of pride. Anyhow Madame Montessori, who has apparently been deploring the educational effects of fairy-tales, would probably see in me a pitiable example of such early perversion, for that image which was one of my first impressions seems likely enough to be one of my last; and when the noise of many new and original musical instruments, with strange shapes and still

stranger noises, has passed away like a procession, I shall hear in the succeeding silence only a rustle and scramble among the rocks and a boy singing on the mountain.

IV. Lamp-Posts

IN contemplating some common object of the modern street, such as an omnibus or a lamp-post, it is sometimes well worth while to stop and think about why such common objects are regarded as commonplace. It is well worth while to try to grasp what is the significance of them—or rather, the quality in modernity which makes them so often seem not so much significant as insignificant. If you stop the omnibus while you stop to think about it, you will be unpopular. Even if you try to grasp the lamp-post in your effort to grasp its significance, you will almost certainly be misunderstood. Nevertheless, the problem is a real one, and not without bearing upon the most poignant politics and ethics of to-day. It is certainly not the things themselves, the idea and upshot of them, that are remote from poetry or even mysticism. The idea of a crowd of human strangers turned into comrades for a journey is full of the oldest pathos and piety of human life. That profound feeling of mortal fraternity and frailty, which tells us we are indeed all in the same boat, is not the less true if expressed in the formula that we are all in the same bus. As for the idea of the lamp-post, the idea of the fixed beacon of the branching thoroughfares, the terrestrial star of the terrestrial traveller, it not only could be, but actually is, the subject of countless songs.

Nor is it even true that there is something so trivial or ugly about the names of the things as to make them commonplace in all connexions, The word

" lamp " is especially beloved by the more decorative and poetic writers ; it is a symbol, and very frequently a title. It is true that if Ruskin had called his eloquent work " The Seven Lamp-Posts of Architecture " the effect, to a delicate ear, would not have been quite the same. But even the word " post " is in no sense impossible in poetry ; it can be found with a fine military ring in phrases like " The Last Post " or " Dying at his Post." I remember. indeed, hearing, when a small child, the line in Macaulay's " Armada " about " with loose rein and bloody spur rode inland many a post," and being puzzled at the picture of a pillar-box or a lamp-post displaying so much activity. But certainly it is not the mere sound of the word that makes it unworkable in the literature of wonder or beauty. " Omnibus " may seem at first sight a more difficult thing to swallow—if I may be allowed a somewhat gigantesque figure of speech. This, it may be said, is a Cockney and ungainly modern word, as it is certainly a Cockney and ungainly modern thing. But even this is not true. The word " omnibus " is a very noble word with a very noble meaning and even tradition. It is derived from an ancient and adamantine tongue which has rolled it with very authoritative thunders : *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus.* It is a word really more human and universal than republic or democracy. A man might very consistently build a temple for all the tribes of men, a temple of the largest pattern and the loveliest design, and then call it an omnibus. It is true that the dignity of this description has really been somewhat diminished by the illogical habit of clipping the word down to the last and least important part of it. But that is only one of many modern examples in which real vulgarity is not in democracy, but rather in the loss of democracy. It is about as democratic to call an

omnibus a bus as it would be to call a democrat a rat.

Another way of explaining the cloud of commonplace interpretation upon modern things is to trace it to that spirit which often calls itself science but which is more often mere repetition. It is proverbial that a child, looking out of the nursery window, regards the lamp-post as part of a fairy-tale of which the lamplighter is the fairy. That lamp-post can be to a baby all that the moon could possibly be to a lover or a poet. Now, it is perfectly true that there is nowadays a spirit of cheap information which imagines that it shoots beyond this shining point, when it merely tells us that there are nine hundred lamp-posts in the town, all exactly alike. It is equally true that there is a spirit of cheap science, which is equally cocksure of its conclusiveness when it tells us that there are so many thousand moons and suns, all much more alike than we might have been disposed to fancy. And we can say of both these calculations that there is nothing really commonplace except the mind of the calculator. The baby is much more right about the flaming lamp than the statistician who counts the posts in the street; and the lover is much more really right about the moon than the astronomer. Here the part is certainly greater than the whole, for it is much better to be tied to one wonderful thing than to allow a mere catalogue of wonderful things to deprive you of the capacity to wonder. It is doubtless true, to a definite extent, that a certain sameness in the mechanical modern creations makes them actually less attractive than the freer recurrences of nature; or, in other words, that twenty lamp-posts really are much more like each other than twenty trees. Nevertheless, even this character will not cover the whole ground, for men do not cease to feel the mystery of natural things even

when they reproduce themselves almost completely, as in the case of pitch darkness or a very heavy sleep. The mere fact that we have seen a lamp-post very often, and that it generally looked very much the same as before, would not of itself prevent us from appreciating its elfin fire, any more than it prevents the child.

Finally, there is a neglected side of this psychological problem which is, I think, one aspect of the mystery of the morality of war. It is not altogether an accident that, while the London lamp-post has always been mild and undistinguished, the Paris lamp-post has been more historic because it has been more horrible. It has been a yet more revolutionary substitute for the guillotine—yet more revolutionary, because it was the guillotine of the mob, as distinct even from the guillotine of the Republic. They hanged aristocrats upon it, including (unless my memory misleads me) that exceedingly unpleasant aristocrat who promulgated the measure of war economy known as "Let them eat grass." Hence it happened that there has been in Paris a fanatical and flamboyant political newspaper actually called "La Lanterne," a paper for extreme Jacobins. If there were a paper in London called the "Lamp-Post," I can only imagine it as a paper for children. As for my other example, I do not know whether even the French Revolution could manage to do anything with the omnibus; but the Jacobins were quite capable of using it as a tumbril.

In short, I suspect that Cockney things have become commonplace because there has been so long lacking in them a certain savour of sacrifice and peril, which there has been in the nursery tale, for all its innocence, and which there has been in the Parisian street, for all its iniquity.

The new wonder that has changed the world before

our eyes is that all this crude and vulgar modern clockwork is most truly being used for a heroic end. It is most emphatically being used for the slaying of a dragon. It is being used, much more unquestionably than the lantern of Paris, to make an end of a tyrant. It was a cant phrase in our cheaper literature of late to say that the new time will make the romance of war mechanical. Is it not more probable that it will make the mechanism of war romantic? As I said at the beginning, the things themselves are not repulsively prosaic; it was their associations that made them so; and to-day their associations are as splendid as any that ever blazoned a shield or embroidered a banner. Much of what made the violation of Belgium so violent a challenge to every conscience lay unconsciously in the fact that the country which had thus become tragic had often been regarded as commonplace. The unpardonable sin was committed in a place of lamp-posts and omnibuses. In similar places has been prepared the just wrath and reparation; and a legend of it will surely linger even in the omnibus that has carried heroes to the mouth of hell, and even in the lamp-post whose lamp has been darkened against the dragon of the sky.

V. The Architect of Spears

THE other day, in the town of Lincoln, I suffered an optical illusion which accidentally revealed to me the strange greatness of the Gothic architecture. Its secret is not, I think, satisfactorily explained in most of the discussions on the subject. It is said that the Gothic eclipses the classical by a certain richness and complexity, at once lively and mysterious. This is true; but Oriental decoration is equally rich and complex, yet it awakens a widely different sentiment. No man ever got out of a Turkey carpet the emotions that he got from a cathedral tower. Over all the exquisite ornament of Arabia and India there is the presence of something stiff and heartless, of something tortured and silent. Dwarfed trees and crooked serpents, heavy flowers and hunchbacked birds accentuate by the very splendour and contrast of their colour the servility and monotony of their shapes. It is like the vision of a sneering sage, who sees the whole universe as a pattern. Certainly no one ever felt like this about Gothic, even if he happens to dislike it. Or, again, some will say that it is the liberty of the Middle Ages in the use of the comic or even the coarse that makes the Gothic more interesting than the Greek. There is more truth in this; indeed, there is real truth in it. Few of the old Christian cathedrals would have passed the Censor of Plays. We talk of the inimitable grandeur of the old cathedrals; but indeed it is rather their gaiety that we do not dare to imitate. We should be rather surprised if a chorister suddenly began singing "Bill

Bailey" in church. Yet that would be only doing in music what the mediævals did in sculpture. They put into a Miserere seat the very scenes that we put into a music-hall song: comic domestic scenes similar to the spilling of the beer and the hanging out of the washing. But though the gaiety of Gothic is one of its features, it also is not the secret of its unique effect. We see a domestic topsy-turvydom in many Japanese sketches. But delightful as these are, with their fairy tree-tops, paper houses, and toddling, infantile inhabitants, the pleasure they give is of a kind quite different from the joy and energy of the gargoyles. Some have even been so shallow and illiterate as to maintain that our pleasure in mediæval building is a mere pleasure in what is barbaric, in what is rough, shapeless, or crumbling like the rocks. This can be dismissed after the same fashion; South Sea idols, with painted eyes and radiating bristles, are a delight to the eye; but they do not affect it in at all the same way as Westminster Abbey. Some again (going to another and almost equally foolish extreme) ignore the coarse and comic in mediævalism, and praise the pointed arch only for its utter purity and simplicity, as of a saint with his hands joined in prayer. Here, again, the uniqueness is missed. There are Renaissance things (such as the ethereal silvery drawings of Raphael), there are even pagan things (such as the Praying Boy), which express as fresh and austere a piety. None of these explanations explain. And I never saw what was the real point about Gothic till I came into the town of Lincoln, and saw it behind a row of furniture-vans.

I did not know they were furniture-vans; at the first glance and in the smoky distance I thought they were a row of cottages. A low stone wall cut off the wheels, and the vans were somewhat of the same colour as the yellowish clay or stone of the buildings

around them. I had come across that interminable Eastern plain which is like the open sea, and all the more so because the one small hill and tower of Lincoln stands up in it like a lighthouse. I had climbed the sharp, crooked streets up to this ecclesiastical citadel; just in front of me was a flourishing and richly coloured kitchen garden; beyond that was the low stone wall; beyond that the row of vans that looked like houses; and beyond and above that, straight and swift and dark, light as a flight of birds, and terrible as the Tower of Babel, Lincoln Cathedral seemed to rise out of human sight.

As I looked at it I asked myself the questions that I have asked here: What was the soul in all those stones? They were varied, but it was not variety; they were solemn, but it was not solemnity; they were farcical, but it was not farce. What is it in them that thrills and soothes a man of our blood and history, that is not there in an Egyptian pyramid or an Indian temple or a Chinese pagoda? All of a sudden the vans I had mistaken for cottages began to move away to the left. In the start this gave to my eye and mind I really fancied that the Cathedral was moving towards the right. The two huge towers seemed to start striding across the plain like the two legs of some giant whose body was covered with the clouds. Then I saw what it was.

The truth about Gothic is, first, that it is alive, and second, that it is on the march. It is the Church Militant; it is the only fighting architecture. All its spires are spears at rest; and all its stones are stones asleep in a catapult. In that instant of illusion, I could hear the arches clash like swords as they crossed each other. The mighty and numberless columns seemed to go swinging by like the huge feet of imperial elephants. The graven foliage wreathed and blew like banners going into battle; the silence was

deafening with all the mingled noises of a military march; the great bell shook down, as the organ shook up, its thunder. The thirsty-throated gargoyles shouted like trumpets from all the roofs and pinnacles as they passed; and from the lectern in the core of the cathedral the eagle of the awful evangelist clashed his wings of brass.

And amid all the noises I seemed to hear the voice of a man shouting in the midst like one ordering regiments hither and thither in the fight; the voice of the great half-military master-builder; the architect of spears. I could almost fancy he wore armour while he made that church; and I knew indeed that, under a scriptural figure, he had borne in either hand the trowel and the sword.

I could imagine for the moment that the whole of that house of life had marched out of the sacred East, alive and interlocked, like an army. Some Eastern nomad had found it solid and silent in the red circle of the desert. He had slept by it as by a world-forgotten pyramid; and been woke at midnight by the wings of stone and brass, the tramping of the tall pillars, the trumpets of the waterspouts. On such a night every snake or sea-beast must have turned and twisted in every crypt or corner of the architecture. And the fiercely coloured saints marching eternally in the flamboyant windows would have carried their glorioles like torches across dark lands and distant seas; till the whole mountain of music and darkness and lights descended roaring on the lonely Lincoln hill. So for some hundred and sixty seconds I saw the battle-beauty of the Gothic; then the last furniture-van shifted itself away; and I saw only a church tower in a quiet English town, round which the English birds were floating.

VI. On Being an Old Bean

I WAS looking at some press cuttings that had pursued me down to a remote cottage beside a river of Norfolk; and as it happened, those that caught my eye were mostly not from the vulgar monopolist press, but from all sorts of quieter and even more studious publications. But what struck me as curious about the collection as a whole was the selection, among half a hundred things that were hardly worth saying, of the things that were considered worth repeating. There seemed to be a most disproportionate importance attached to a trivial phrase I had used about the alleged indecorum of a gentleman calling his father an old bean. I had been asked to join in a discussion in the "Morning Post," touching the alleged disrespect of youth towards age, and I had done so; chiefly because I have a respect for the "Morning Post" for its courage about political *corruption and cosmopolitan conspiracies, in spite of* deep disagreement on other very vital things. And I said what I should have thought was so true as to be trite. I said that it makes life narrower and not broader to lose the special note of piety or respect for the past still living; and that to call an old man an old bean is merely to lose all intelligent sense of the significance of an old man. Since then, to my great entertainment, I seem to have figured in various papers as a sort of ferocious heavy father, come out on my own account to curse the numerous young sprigs who have called me an old bean. But this is an error. I should be the last to deny that I am

heavy, but I am not fatherly; nor am I ferocious, at any rate I am not ferocious about this. Individually I regard the question with a detachment verging on indifference. I cannot imagine anybody except an aged and very lean vegetarian positively dancing with joy at being called an old bean; and I am not a very lean vegetarian. But still less can I imagine anyone regarding the accusation with horror or resentment; the sins and crimes blackening the career of a bean must be comparatively few; its character must be simple and free from complexity, and its manner of life innocent. A philosophic rationalist wrote to me the other day to say that my grubbing in the grossest superstitions of the past reminded him of "an old sow pig rooting in the refuse of the kitchen heap," and expressed a hope that I should be dragged from this occupation and made to resume "the cap and bells of yore." That is something like a vigorous and vivid comparison; though my Feminist friends may be distressed at my being compared to a sow as well as a pig; and though I am not quite clear myself about how the animal would get on when he had resumed the cap and bells of yore. But it would certainly be a pity, when it was possible to find this image in the kitchen heap, to be content with one from the kitchen garden. It would indeed be a lost opportunity to work yourself up to the furious pitch of calling your enemy a beast, and then only call him a bean.

From the extracts I saw, it would seem that certain ladies were especially lively in their protest against my antiquated prejudices; and rioted in quite a bean-feast of old beans. The form the argument generally takes is to ask why parents and children should not be friends, or as they often put it (I deeply regret to say) pals. Neither term seems to me to convey a sufficiently distinctive meaning; and I take it that

the best term for what they really mean is that they should be comrades. Now comradeship is a very real and splendid thing; but this is simply the cant of comradeship. A boy does not take his mother with him when he goes bird-nesting; and his affection for his mother is of another kind unconnected with the idea of her climbing a tree. Three men do not generally take an aged and beloved aunt with them as part of their luggage on a walking tour; and if they did, it would not be so much disrespectful to age as unjust to youth. For this confusion between two valuable but varied things, like most of such modern confusions, is quite as liable to obscurantist as to mutinous abuse; and is as easy to turn into tyranny as into licence. If a boy's aunts are his comrades, why should he need any comrades except his aunts? If his father and mother are perfect and consummate pals, why should he fool away his time with more ignorant, immature and insufficient pals? As in a good many other modern things, the end of the old parental dignity would be the beginning of a new parental tyranny. I would rather the boy loved his father as his father than feared him as a Frankenstein giant of a superior and supercilious friend, armed in that unequal friendship with all the weapons of psychology and psycho-analysis. If he loves him as a father he loves him as an older man; and if we are to abolish all differences of tone towards those older than ourselves, we must presumably do the same to those younger than ourselves. All healthy people, for instance, feel an instinctive and almost impersonal affection for a baby. Is a baby a comrade? Is he to climb the tree and go on the walking tour; or are we on his account to abolish all trees and tours? Are the grandfather aged ninety, the son aged thirty, and the grandson aged three, all to set out together on their travels, with the same knapsacks and knicker-

bockers ? I have read somewhere that in one of the Ten or Twelve or Two Hundred Types of Filial Piety reverenced by the Chinese, one was an elderly sage and statesman, who dressed up as a child of four and danced before his yet more elderly parents, to delight them with the romantic illusion that they were still quite young. This in itself could not but attract remark ; but this in itself I am prepared to defend. It was an exceptional and even extraordinary festivity, like the reversals of the Saturnalia ; and I wish we could have seen some vigorous old gentleman like Lord Halsbury or the Archbishop of Canterbury performing a similar act of piety. But in the Utopia of comradeship now commended to us, old and young are expected normally to think alike, feel alike and talk alike ; and may therefore normally and permanently be supposed to dress alike. Whether the parents dress as children or the children as parents, it is clear that they must all dress as pals, whatever be the ceremonial dress of that rank. I imagine it as something in tweeds, with rather a loud check.

As I considered these things I looked across the kitchen garden of the cottage, and the association of peas and beans brought the fancy back to the foolish figure of speech with which the discussion began. There is a proverb, which is like most of our popular sayings, a country proverb, about things that are as like as two peas. There is something significant in the fact that this is as near as the rural imagination could get to a mere mechanical monotony. For as a matter of fact it is highly improbable that any two peas are exactly alike. A survey of the whole world of peas, with all their forms and uses, would probably reveal every sort of significance between the sweet peas of sentiment and the dried peas of asceticism. Modern machinery has gone far beyond such rude rural attempts at dullness. Things are not as like as

two peas in the sense that they are as like as two pins. But the flippant phrase under discussion does really imply that they are as like as two beans. It is really part of the low and levelling philosophy that assimilates all things too much to each other. It does not mean that we see any fanciful significance in the use of the term, as in a country proverb. It is not that we see an old gentleman with fine curling white hair and say to him poetically, "Permit me, venerable cauliflower, to inquire after your health." It is not that we address an old farmer with a deep and rich complexion, saying, "I trust, most admirable of beetroots, that you are as well as you look." When we say, "How are you, old bean?" the error is not so much that we say something rude, but that we say nothing because we mean nothing.

As I happened to meet at that moment a girl belonging to the family of the cottage, I showed her the cutting, and asked her opinion upon the great progressive problem of calling your father an old bean. At which she laughed derisively, and merely said, "As if anybody would!"

VII. French and English

IT is obvious that there is a great deal of difference between being international and being cosmopolitan. All good men are international. Nearly all bad men are cosmopolitan. If we are to be international we must be national. And it is largely because those who call themselves the friends of peace have not dwelt sufficiently on this distinction that they do not impress the bulk of any of the nations to which they belong. International peace means a peace between nations, not a peace after the destruction of nations, like the Buddhist peace after the destruction of personality. The golden age of the good European is like the heaven of the Christian: it is a place where people will love each other; not like the heaven of the Hindu, a place where they will be each other. And in the case of national character this can be seen in a curious way. It will generally be found, I think, that the more a man really appreciates and admires the soul of another people the less he will attempt to imitate it; he will be conscious that there is something in it too deep and too unmanageable to imitate. The Englishman who has a fancy for France will try to be French; the Englishman who admires France will remain obstinately English. This is to be particularly noticed in the case of our relations with the French, because it is one of the outstanding peculiarities of the French that their vices are all on the surface, and their extraordinary virtues concealed. One might almost say that their vices are the flower of their virtues.

Thus their obscenity is the expression of their passionate love of dragging all things into the light. The avarice of their peasants means the independence of their peasants. What the English call their rudeness in the streets is a phase of their social equality. The worried look of their women is connected with the responsibility of their women; and a certain unconscious brutality of hurry and gesture in the men is related to their inexhaustible and extraordinary military courage. Of all countries, therefore, France is the worst country for a superficial fool to admire. Let a fool hate France: if the fool loves it he will soon be a knave. He will certainly admire it, not only for the things that are not creditable, but actually for the things that are not there. He will admire the grace and indolence of the most industrious people in the world. He will admire the romance and fantasy of the most determinedly respectable and commonplace people in the world. This mistake the Englishman will make if he admires France too hastily; but the mistake that he makes about France will be slight compared with the mistake that he makes about himself. An Englishman who professes really to like French realistic novels, really to be at home in a French modern theatre, really to experience no shock on first seeing the savage French caricatures, is making a mistake very dangerous for his own sincerity. He is admiring something he does not understand. He is reaping where he has not sown, and taking up where he has not laid down; he is trying to taste the fruit when he has never toiled over the tree. He is trying to pluck the exquisite fruit of French cynicism, when he has never tilled the rude but rich soil of French virtue.

The thing can only be made clear to Englishmen by turning it round. Suppose a Frenchman came out of democratic France to live in England, where the

shadow of the great houses still falls everywhere, and where even freedom was, in its origin, aristocratic. If the Frenchman saw our aristocracy and liked it, if he saw our snobbishness and liked it, if he set himself to imitate it, we all know what we should feel. We all know that we should feel that that particular Frenchman was a repulsive little gnat. He would be imitating English aristocracy; he would be imitating the English vice. But he would not even understand the vice he plagiarized; especially he would not understand that the vice is partly a virtue. He would not understand those elements in the English which balance snobbishness and make it human: the great kindness of the English, their hospitality, their unconscious poetry, their sentimental conservatism, which really admires the gentry. The French Royalist sees that the English like their King. But he does not grasp that while it is base to worship a King, it is almost noble to worship a powerless King. The impotence of the Hanoverian Sovereigns has raised the English loyal subject almost to the chivalry and dignity of a Jacobite. The Frenchman sees that the English servant is respectful: he does not realize that he is also disrespectful; that there is an English legend of the humorous and faithful servant, who is as much a personality as his master; the Caleb Balderstone, the Sam Weller. He sees that the English do admire a nobleman; he does not allow for the fact that they admire a nobleman most when he does not behave like one. They like a noble to be unconscious and amiable: the slave may be humble, but the master must not be proud. The master is Life, as they would like to enjoy it; and among the joys they desire in him there is none which they desire more sincerely than that of generosity, of throwing money about among mankind, or, to use the noble mediæval word, largesse—the joy of largeness. That

is why a cabman tells you you are *no gentleman* if you give him his correct fare. Not only his pocket, but his soul is hurt. You have wounded his ideal. You have defaced his vision of the perfect aristocrat. All this is really very subtle and elusive; it is very difficult to separate what is mere slavishness from what is a sort of vicarious nobility in the English love of a lord. And no Frenchman could easily grasp it at all. He would think it was mere slavishness; and if he liked it, he would be a slave. So every Englishman must (at first) feel French candour to be mere brutality. And if he likes it, he is a brute. These national merits must not be understood so easily. It requires long years of plenitude and quiet, the slow growth of great parks, the seasoning of oaken beams, the dark enrichment of red wine in cellars and in inns, all the leisure and the life of England through many centuries, to produce at last the generous and genial fruit of English snobbishness. And it requires battery and barricade, songs in the streets, and ragged men dead for an idea, to produce and justify the terrible flower of French indecency.

When I was in Paris a short time ago, I went with an English friend of mine to an extremely brilliant and rapid succession of French plays, each occupying about twenty minutes. They were all astonishingly effective; but there was one of them which was so effective that my friend and I fought about it outside, and had almost to be separated by the police. It was intended to indicate how men really behaved in a wreck or naval disaster, how they break down, how they scream, how they fight each other without object and in a mere hatred of everything. And then there was added, with all that horrible irony which Voltaire began, a scene in which a great statesman made a speech over their bodies, saying that they

were all heroes and had died in a fraternal embrace. My friend and I came out of this theatre, and as he had lived long in Paris, he said, like a Frenchman: "What admirable artistic arrangement! Is it not exquisite?" "No," I replied, assuming as far as possible the traditional attitude of John Bull in the pictures in "Punch"—"No, it is not exquisite. Perhaps it is unmeaning; if it is unmeaning I do not mind. But if it has a meaning I know what the meaning is; it is that under all their pageant of chivalry men are not only beasts, but even hunted beasts. I do not know much of humanity, especially when humanity talks in French. But I know when a thing is meant to uplift the human soul, and when it is meant to depress it. I know that 'Cyrano de Bergerac' (where the actors talked even quicker) was meant to encourage man. And I know that this was meant to discourage him." "These sentimental and moral views of art," began my friend, but I broke into his words as a light broke into my mind. "Let me say to you," I said, "what Jaurès said to Liebknecht at the Socialist Conference: 'You have not died on the barricades.' You are an Englishman, as I am, and you ought to be as amiable as I am. These people have some right to be terrible in art, for they have been terrible in politics. They may endure mock tortures on the stage; they have seen real tortures in the streets. They have been hurt for the idea of Democracy. They have been hurt for the idea of Catholicism. It is not so utterly unnatural to them that they should be hurt for the idea of literature. But, by blazes, it is altogether unnatural to me! And the worst thing of all is that I, who am an Englishman, loving comfort, should find comfort in such things as this. The French do not seek comfort here, but rather unrest. This restless people seeks to keep itself in a perpetual agony of the revolu-

tionary mood. Frenchmen, seeking revolution, may find the humiliation of humanity inspiring. But God forbid that two pleasure-seeking Englishmen should ever find it pleasant ! "

VIII. The Sentimental Scot

OF all the great nations of Christendom, the Scotch are by far the most romantic. I have just enough Scotch experience and just enough Scotch blood to know this in the only way in which a thing can really be known; that is, when the outer world and the inner world are at one. I know it is always said that the Scotch are practical, prosaic, and puritan; that they have an eye to business.

I like that phrase "an eye" to business. Polyphemus had an eye for business; it was in the middle of his forehead. It served him admirably for the only two duties which are demanded in a modern financier and captain of industry: the two duties of counting sheep and of eating men. But when that one eye was put out he was done for. But the Scotch are not one-eyed practical men, though their best friends must admit that they are occasionally business-like. They are, quite fundamentally, romantic and sentimental, and this is proved by the very economic argument that is used to prove their harshness and hunger for the material. The mass of Scots have accepted the industrial civilization, with its factory chimneys and its famine prices, with its steam and smoke and steel —and strikes. The mass of the Irish have not accepted it. The mass of the Irish have clung to agriculture with claws of iron; and have succeeded in keeping it. That is because the Irish, though far inferior to the Scotch in art and literature, are hugely superior to them in practical politics. You do need to be very romantic to accept the industrial civiliza-

tion. It does really require all the old Gaelic glamour to make men think that Glasgow is a grand place. Yet the miracle is achieved; and while I was in Glasgow I shared the illusion. I have never had the faintest illusion about Leeds or Birmingham. The industrial dream suited the Scots. Here was a really romantic vista, suited to a romantic people; a vision of higher and higher chimneys taking hold upon the heavens, of fiercer and fiercer fires in which adamant could evaporate like dew. Here were taller and taller engines that began already to shriek and gesticulate like giants. Here were thunderbolts of communication which already flashed to and fro like thoughts. It was unreasonable to expect the rapt, dreamy, romantic Scot to stand still in such a whirl of wizardry to ask whether he, the ordinary Scot, would be any the richer.

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He, the ordinary Scot, is very much the poorer. Glasgow is not a rich city. It is a particularly poor city ruled by a few particularly rich men. It is not, perhaps, quite so poor a city as Liverpool, London, Manchester, Birmingham, or Bolton. It is vastly poorer than Rome, Rouen, Munich, or Cologne. A certain civic vitality notable in Glasgow may, perhaps, be due to the fact that the high poetic patriotism of the Scots has there been reinforced by the cutting common sense and independence of the Irish. In any case, I think there can be no doubt of the main historical fact. The Scotch were tempted by the enormous but unequal opportunities of industrialism, because the Scotch are romantic. The Irish refused those enormous and unequal opportunities, because the Irish are clear-sighted. They would not need very clear sight by this time to see that in England and Scotland the temptation has been a betrayal. The industrial system has failed.

The Sentimental Scot

I was coming the other day along a great valley road that strikes out of the westland counties about Glasgow, more or less towards the east and the widening of the Forth. It may, for all I know (I amused myself with the fancy), be the way along which Wallace came with his crude army, when he gave battle before Stirling Brig; and, in the midst of mediæval diplomacies, made a new nation possible. Anyhow, the romantic quality of Scotland rolled all about me, as much in the last reek of Glasgow as in the first rain upon the hills. The tall factory chimneys seemed trying to be taller than the mountain peaks; as if this landscape were full (as its history has been full) of the very madness of ambition. The wage-slavery we live in is a wicked thing. But there is nothing in which the Scotch are more piercing and poetical, I might say more perfect, than in their Scotch wickedness. It is what makes the Master of Ballantrae the most thrilling of all fictitious villains. It is what makes the Master of Lovat the most thrilling of all historical villains. It is poetry. It is an intensity which is on the edge of madness—or (what is worse) magic. Well, the Scotch have managed to apply something of this fierce romanticism even to the lowest of all lordships and serfdoms—the proletarian inequality of to-day. You do meet now and then, in Scotland, the man you never meet anywhere else but in novels; I mean the self-made man; the hard, insatiable man, merciless to himself as well as to others. It is not "enterprise"; it is kleptomania. He is quite mad, and a much more obvious public pest than any other kind of kleptomaniac; but though he is a cheat, he is not an illusion. He does exist; I have met quite two of him. Him alone among modern merchants we do not weakly flatter when we call him a bandit. Something of the irresponsibility of the true dark ages really clings about him. Our scientific civilization is not a civiliza-

tion ; it is a smoke nuisance. Like smoke it is choking us ; like smoke it will pass away. Only of one or two Scotsmen, in my experience, was it true that where there is smoke there is fire.

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But there are other kinds of fire ; and better. The one great advantage of this strange national temper is that, from the beginning of all chronicles, it has provided resistance as well as cruelty. In Scotland nearly everything has always been in revolt—especially loyalty. If these people are capable of making Glasgow, they are also capable of wrecking it ; and the thought of my many good friends in that city makes me really doubtful about which would figure in human memories as the more huge calamity of the two. In Scotland there are many rich men so weak as to call themselves strong. But there are not so many poor men weak enough to believe them.

As I came out of Glasgow I saw men standing about the road. They had little lanterns tied to the fronts of their caps, like the fairies who used to dance in the old fairy pantomimes. They were not, however, strictly speaking, fairies. They might have been called gnomes, since they worked in the chasms of those purple and chaotic hills. They worked in the mines from whence comes the fuel of our fires. Just at the moment when I saw them, moreover, they were not dancing ; nor were they working. They were doing nothing. Which, in my opinion (and I trust yours), was the finest thing they could do.

IX. The Man and His Newspaper

AT a little station, which I decline to specify, somewhere between Oxford and Guildford, I missed connexion or miscalculated a route in such manner that I was left stranded for rather more than an hour. I adore waiting at railway stations, but this was not a very sumptuous specimen. There was nothing on the platform except a chocolate automatic machine, which eagerly absorbed pennies but produced no corresponding chocolate, and a small paper-stall with a few remaining copies of a cheap imperial organ which we will call the "Daily Wire." It does not matter which imperial organ it was, as they all say the same thing.

Though I knew it quite well already, I read it with gravity as I strolled out of the station and up the country road. It opened with the striking phrase that the Radicals were setting class against class. It went on to remark that nothing had contributed more to make our Empire happy and enviable, to create that obvious list of glories which you can supply for yourself, the prosperity of all classes in our great cities, our populous and growing villages, the success of our rule in Ireland, etc., etc., than the sound Anglo-Saxon readiness of all classes in the State "to work heartily hand-in-hand." It was this alone, the paper assured me, that had saved us from the horrors of the French Revolution. "It is easy for the Radicals," it went on very solemnly, "to make jokes about the dukes. Very few of these revolutionary gentlemen have given to the poor one half of the earnest thought,

tireless unselfishness, and truly Christian patience that are given to them by the great landlords of this country. We are very sure that the English people, with their sturdy common sense, will prefer to be in the hands of English gentlemen rather than in the miry claws of Socialistic buccaneers."

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Just when I had reached this point I nearly ran into a man. Despite the populousness and growth of our villages, he appeared to be the only man for miles, but the road up which I had wandered turned and narrowed with equal abruptness, and I nearly knocked him off the gate on which he was leaning. I pulled up to apologize, and since he seemed ready for society, and even pathetically pleased with it, I tossed the "Daily Wire" over a hedge and fell into speech with him. He wore a wreck of respectable clothes, and his face had that plebeian refinement which one sees in small tailors and watchmakers, in poor men of sedentary trades. Behind him a twisted group of winter trees stood up as gaunt and tattered as himself, but I do not think that the tragedy that he symbolized was a mere fancy from the spectral wood. There was a fixed look in his face which told that he was one of those who in keeping body and soul together have difficulties not only with the body, but also with the soul.

He was a Cockney by birth, and retained the touching accent of those streets from which I am an exile; but he had lived nearly all his life in this countryside; and he began to tell me the affairs of it in that formless, tail-foremost way in which the poor gossip about their great neighbours. Names kept coming and going in the narrative like charms or spells, unaccompanied by any biographical explanation. In

particular the name of somebody called Sir Joseph multiplied itself with the omnipresence of a deity. I took Sir Joseph to be the principal landowner of the district; and as the confused picture unfolded itself, I began to form a definite and by no means pleasing picture of Sir Joseph. He was spoken of in a strange way, frigid and yet familiar, as a child might speak of a stepmother or an unavoidable nurse; something intimate, but by no means tender; something that was waiting for you by your own bed and board; that told you to do this and forbade you to do that, with a caprice that was cold and yet somehow personal. It did not appear that Sir Joseph was popular, but he was "a household word." He was not so much a public man as a sort of private god or omnipotence. The particular man to whom I spoke said he had "been in trouble," and that Sir Joseph had been "pretty hard on him."

And under that grey and silver cloudland, with a background of those frost-bitten and wind-tortured trees, the little Londoner told me a tale which, true or false, was as heartrending as Romeo and Juliet.

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He had slowly built up in the village a small business as a photographer, and he was engaged to a girl at one of the lodges, whom he loved with passion. "I'm the sort that 'ad better marry," he said; and for all his frail figure I knew what he meant. But Sir Joseph, and especially Sir Joseph's wife, did not want a photographer in the village; it made the girls vain, or perhaps they disliked this particular photographer. He worked and worked until he had just enough to marry on honestly; and almost on the eve of his wedding the lease expired, and Sir Joseph appeared in all his glory. He refused to renew the lease; and the

man went wildly elsewhere. But Sir Joseph was ubiquitous; and the whole of that place was barred against him. In all that country he could not find a shed to which to bring home his bride. The man appealed and explained; but he was disliked as a demagogue, as well as a photographer. Then it was as if a black cloud came across the winter sky; for I knew what was coming. I forget even in what words he told of Nature maddened and set free. But I still see, as in a photograph, the grey muscles of the winter trees standing out like tight ropes, as if all Nature were on the rack.

"She 'ad to go away," he said.

"Wouldn't her parents," I began, and hesitated on the word "forgive."

"Oh, her people forgave her," he said. "But Her Ladyship——"

"Her Ladyship made the sun and moon and stars," I said impatiently. "So of course she can come between a mother and the child of her body."

"Well, it does seem a bit 'ard . . ." he began with a break in his voice.

"But, good Lord, man," I cried, "it isn't a matter of hardness! It's a matter of impious and indecent wickedness. If your Sir Joseph knew the passions he was playing with, he did you a wrong for which in many Christian countries he would have a knife in him."

The man continued to look across the frozen fields with a frown. He certainly told his tale with real resentment, whether it was true or false, or only exaggerated. He was certainly sullen and injured; but he did not seem to think of any avenue of escape. At last he said:

"Well, it's a bad world; let's 'ope there's a better one."

"Amen," I said. "But when I think of Sir

Joseph, I understand how men have hoped there was a worse one."

Then we were silent for a long time, and felt the cold of the day crawling up, and at last I said, abruptly:

"The other day at a Budget meeting, I heard——"

He took his elbows off the stile and seemed to change from head to foot like a man coming out of sleep with a yawn. He said in a totally new voice, louder but much more careless, "Ah yes, sir, . . . this 'ere Budget . . . the Radicals are doing a lot of 'arm."

I listened intently, and he went on. He said with a sort of careful precision, "Settin' class against class; that's what I call it. Why, what's made our Empire except the readiness of all classes to work 'eartily 'and-in-'and."

He walked a little up and down the lane and stamped with the cold. Then he said, "What I say is, what else kept us from the 'orrors of the French Revolution?"

My memory is good, and I waited in tense eagerness for the phrase that came next. "They may laugh at Dukes; I'd like to see them 'alf as kind and Christian and patient as lots of the landlords are. Let me tell you, sir," he said, facing round at me with the final air of one launching a paradox. "The English people 'ave some common sense, and they'd rather be in the 'ands of gentlemen than in the claws of a lot of Socialist thieves."

I had an indescribable sense that I ought to applaud, as if I were a public meeting. The insane separation in the man's soul between his experience and his ready-made theory was but a type of what covers a quarter of England. As he turned away, I saw the "Daily Wire" sticking out of his shabby pocket. He bade me farewell in quite a blaze of

catchwords, and went stumping up the road. I saw his figure grow smaller and smaller in the great green landscape ; even as the Free Man has grown smaller and smaller in the English countryside.

X. The Advantages of Having One Leg

A FRIEND of mine who was visiting a poor woman in bereavement and casting about for some phrase of consolation that should not be either insolent or weak, said at last, "I think one can live through these great sorrows and even be the better. What wears one is the little worries." "That's quite right, mum," answered the old woman with emphasis, "and I ought to know, seeing I've had ten of 'em." It is, perhaps, in this sense that it is most true that little worries are most wearing. In its vaguer significance the phrase, though it contains a truth, contains also some possibilities of self-deception and error. People who have both small troubles and big ones have the right to say that they find the small ones the most bitter; and it is undoubtedly true that the back which is bowed under loads incredible can feel a faint addition to those loads; a giant holding up the earth and all its animal creation might still find the grasshopper a burden. But I am afraid that the maxim that the smallest worries are the worst is sometimes used or abused by people, because they have nothing but the very smallest worries. The lady may excuse herself for reviling the crumpled rose-leaf by reflecting with what extraordinary dignity she would wear the crown of thorns—if she had to. The gentleman may permit himself to curse the dinner and tell himself that he would behave much better if it were a mere matter of starvation. We need not deny that the grasshopper on man's shoulder is a burden; but we need not pay much respect to a gentleman who is

always calling out that he would rather have an elephant when he knows there are no elephants in the country. We may concede that a straw may break the camel's back, but we like to know that it really is the last straw and not the first.

I grant that those who have serious wrongs have a real right to grumble, so long as they grumble about something else. It is a singular fact that if they are sane they almost always do grumble about something else. To talk quite reasonably about your own quite real wrongs is the quickest way to go off your head. But people with great troubles talk about little ones, and the man who complains of the crumpled rose leaf very often has his flesh full of the thorns. But if a man has commonly a very clear and happy daily life then I think we are justified in asking that he shall not make mountains out of molehills. I do not deny that molehills can sometimes be important. Small annoyances have this evil about them, that they can be more abrupt because they are more invisible; they cast no shadow before, they have no atmosphere. No one ever had a mystical premonition that he was going to tumble over a hassock. William III died by falling over a molehill; I do not suppose that with all his varied abilities he could have managed to fall over a mountain. But when all this is allowed for, I repeat that we may ask a happy man (not William III) to put up with pure inconveniences, and even make them part of his happiness. Of positive pain or positive poverty I do not here speak. I speak of those innumerable accidental limitations that are always falling across our path—bad weather, confinement to this or that house or room, failure of appointments or arrangements, waiting at railway stations, missing posts, finding unpunctuality when we want punctuality, or, what is worse, finding punctuality when we don't. It is of the poetic

pleasures to be drawn from all these that I sing—I sing with confidence because I have recently been experimenting in the poetic pleasures which arise from having to sit in one chair with a sprained foot, with the only alternative course of standing on one leg like a stork. A stork is a poetic simile; therefore I eagerly adopted it.

To appreciate anything we must always isolate it, even if the thing itself symbolize something other than isolation. If we wish to see what a house is it must be a house in some uninhabited landscape. If we wish to depict what a man really is we must depict a man alone in a desert or on a dark sea sand. So long as he is a single figure he means all that humanity means; so long as he is solitary he means human society; so long as he is solitary he means sociability and comradeship. Add another figure and the picture is less human—not more so. One is company, two is none. If you wish to symbolize human building draw one dark tower on the horizon; if you wish to symbolize light let there be no star in the sky. Indeed, all through that strangely lit season which we call our day there is but one star in the sky—a large, fierce star which we call the sun. One sun is splendid; six suns would be only vulgar. One Tower of Giotto is sublime; a row of Towers of Giotto would be only like a row of white posts. The poetry of art is in beholding the single tower; the poetry of nature in seeing the single tree; the poetry of love in following the single woman; the poetry of religion in worshipping the single star. And so, in the same pensive lucidity, I find the poetry of all human anatomy in standing on a single leg. To express complete and perfect leggishness the leg must stand in sublime isolation, like the tower in the wilderness. As Ibsen so finely says, the strongest leg is that which stands most alone.

A Gleaming Cohort

This lonely leg on which I rest has all the simplicity of some Doric column. The students of architecture tell us that the only legitimate use of a column is to support weight. This column of mine fulfils its legitimate function. It supports weight. Being of an animal and organic consistency, it may even improve by the process, and during these few days that I am thus unequally balanced the helplessness or dislocation of the one leg may find compensation in the astonishing strength and classic beauty of the other leg. Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson in Mr. George Meredith's novel might pass by at any moment, and seeing me in the stork-like attitude would exclaim, with equal admiration and a more literal exactitude, "He has a leg." Notice how this famous literary phrase supports my contention touching this isolation of any admirable thing. Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson, wishing to make a clear and perfect picture of human grace, said that Sir Willoughby Patterne had a leg. She delicately glossed over and concealed the clumsy and offensive fact that he had really two legs. Two legs were superfluous and irrelevant, a reflection, and a confusion. Two legs would have confused Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson like two Monuments in London. That having had one good leg he should have another—this would be to use vain repetitions as the Gentiles do. She would have been as much bewildered by him as if he had been a centipede.

All pessimism has a secret optimism for its object. All surrender of life, all denial of pleasure, all darkness, all austerity, all desolation has for its real aim this separation of something so that it may be poignantly and perfectly enjoyed. I feel grateful for the slight sprain which has introduced this mysterious and fascinating division between one of my feet and the other. The way to love anything is to realize that it might be lost. In one of my feet I can feel

how strong and splendid a foot is; in the other I can realize how very much otherwise it might have been. The moral of the thing is wholly exhilarating. This world and all our powers in it are far more awful and beautiful than we ever know until some accident reminds us. If you wish to perceive that limitless felicity, limit yourself if only for a moment. If you wish to realize how fearfully and wonderfully God's image is made, stand on one leg. If you want to realize the splendid vision of all visible things—wink the other eye.

XI. On Pigs as Pets

A DREAM of my pure and aspiring boyhood has been realized in the following paragraph, which I quote exactly as it stands :

" A complaint by the Epping Rural District Council against a spinster keeping a pig in her house has evoked the following reply : ' I received your letter, and felt very much cut up, as I am laying in the pig's room. I have not been able to stand up or get on my legs ; when I can, I will get him in his own room, that was built for him. As to getting him off the premises, I shall do no such thing, as he is no nuisance to anyone. We have had to be in the pig's room now for three years. I am not going to get rid of my pet. We must all live together. I will move him as soon as God gives me strength to do so.' "

The Rev. T. C. Spurgin observed : " The lady will require a good deal of strength to move her pet which weighs forty stone."

It appears to me that the Rev. T. C. Spurgin ought, as a matter of chivalry, to assist the lady to move the pig, if it is indeed too heavy for her strength ; no gentleman should permit a lady, who is already very much cut up, to lift forty stone of still animated and recalcitrant pork ; he should himself escort the animal downstairs. It is an unusual situation, I admit. In the normal life of humanity the gentleman gives his arm to the lady, and not to the pig ; and it is the pig who is very much cut up. But the situation seems to

be exceptional in every way. It is all very well for the lady to say that the pig is no nuisance to anyone: as it seems that she has established herself in the pig's private suite of apartments, the question rather is whether she is a nuisance to the pig. But indeed I do not think that this poor woman's fad is an inch more fantastic than many such oddities indulged in by rich and reputable people; and, as I say, I have from my boyhood entertained the dream. I never could imagine why pigs should not be kept as pets. To begin with, pigs are very beautiful animals. Those who think otherwise are those who do not look at anything with their own eyes, but only through other people's eyeglasses. The actual lines of a pig (I mean of a really fat pig) are among the loveliest and most luxuriant in nature; the pig has the same great curves, swift and yet heavy, which we see in rushing water or in rolling cloud. Compared to him, the horse, for instance, is a bony, angular, and abrupt animal. I remember that Mr. H. G. Wells, in arguing for the relativity of things (a subject over which even the Greek philosophers went to sleep until Christianity woke them up), pointed out that, while a horse is commonly beautiful if seen in profile, he is excessively ugly if seen from the top of a dogcart, having a long, lean neck, and a body like a fiddle. Now, there is no point of view from which a really corpulent pig is not full of sumptuous and satisfying curves. You can look down on a pig from the top of the most unnaturally lofty dogcart; you can (if not pressed for time) allow the pig to draw the dogcart; and I suppose a dogcart has as much to do with pigs as it has with dogs. You can examine the pig from the top of an omnibus, from the top of the Monument, from a balloon, or an airship; and as long as he is visible he will be beautiful. In short, he has that fuller, subtler, and more universal kind of shapeliness

which the unthinking (gazing at pigs and distinguished journalists) mistake for a mere absence of shape. For fatness itself is a valuable quality. While it creates admiration in the onlookers, it creates modesty in the possessor. If there is anything on which I differ from the monastic institutions of the past, it is that they sometimes sought to achieve humility by means of emaciation. It may be that the thin monks were holy, but I am sure it was the fat monks who were humble. Falstaff said that to be fat is not to be hated; but it certainly is to be laughed at, and that is a more wholesome experience for the soul of man.

I do not urge that it is effective upon the soul of a pig, who, indeed, seems somewhat indifferent to public opinion on this point. Nor do I mean that mere fatness is the only beauty of the pig. The beauty of the best pigs lies in a certain sleepy perfection of contour which links them especially to the smooth strength of our south English land in which they live. There are two other things in which one can see his perfect and piggish quality: one is in the silent and smooth swell of the Sussex Downs, so enormous and yet so innocent. The other is in the sleek, strong limbs of those beech trees that grow so thick in their valleys. These three holy symbols, the pig, the beech tree, and the chalk down, stand for ever as expressing the one thing that England as England has to say—that power is not inconsistent with kindness. Tears of regret come into my eyes when I remember that three lions or leopards, or whatever they are, sprawl in a fantastic, foreign way across the arms of England. We ought to have three pigs passant, gardant, or on gules. It breaks my heart to think that four commonplace lions are couched around the base of the Nelson Column. There ought to be four colossal Hampshire hogs to keep watch over so national a spot. Perhaps some of

our sculptors will attack the conception; perhaps the lady's pig, which weighs forty stone and seems to be something of a domestic problem, might begin to earn its living as an artist's model.

Again, we do not know what fascinating variations might happen in the pig if once the pig were a pet. The dog has been domesticated—that is, destroyed. Nobody now in London can form the faintest idea of what a dog would look like. You know a Dachshund in the street; you know a St. Bernard in the street. But if you saw a Dog in the street you would run from him screaming. For hundreds, if not thousands, of years no one has looked at the horrible hairy original thing called Dog. Why, then, should we be hopeless about the substantial and satisfying thing called Pig? Types of Pig may also be differentiated; delicate shades of Pig may also be produced. A monstrous pig as big as a pony may perambulate the streets like a St. Bernard without attracting attention. An elegant and unnaturally attenuated pig may have all the appearance of a greyhound. There may be little, frisky, fighting pigs like Irish or Scotch terriers; there may be little pathetic pigs like King Charles spaniels. Artificial breeding might reproduce the awful original pig, tusks and all, the terror of the forests—something bigger, more mysterious, and more bloody than the bloodhound. Those interested in hairdressing might amuse themselves by arranging the bristles like those of a poodle. Those fascinated by the Celtic mystery of the Western Highlands might see if they could train the bristles to be a veil or curtain for the eye, like those of a Skye terrier; that sensitive and invisible Celtic spirit. With elaborate training one might have a sheep-pig instead of a sheep-dog, a lap-pig instead of a lap-dog.

What is it that makes you look so incredulous? Why do you still feel slightly superior to the poor lady

who would not be parted from her pig ? Why do you not at once take the hog to your heart ? Reason suggests his evident beauty. Evolution suggests his probable improvement. Is it, perhaps, some instinct, some tradition . . . ? Well, apply that to women, children, animals, and we will argue again.

XII. The Poet Hump

WITH gravity inseparable from the deep conventionality of country people, Mr. Pump unfolded the paper on which he had recorded the only antagonistic emotion that was strong enough in him to screw his infinite English tolerance to the pitch of song. He read out the title very carefully and in full.

"'Song Against Grocers,' by Humphrey Pump, sole Proprietor of 'The Old Ship,' Pebbleswick. Good Accommodation for Man and Beast. Celebrated as the House at which both Queen Charlotte and Jonathan Wilde put up on different occasions; and where the chimpanzee man was mistaken for Bonaparte. This song is written against Grocers:

"God made the wicked Grocer
For a mystery and a sign,
That men might shun the awful shops
And go to inns to dine;
Where the bacon's on the rafter
And the wine is in the wood,
And God that made good laughter
Has seen that they are good.

The evil-hearted Grocer
Would call his mother "Ma'am,"
And bow at her and bob at her
Her aged soul to damn,
And rub his horrid hands and ask
What article was next,
Though *mortis in articulo*
Should be her proper text.

His props are not his children,
But pert lads underpaid,

A Gleaming Cohort

Who call out 'Cash!' and bang about
To work his wicked trade;
He keeps a lady in a cage
Most cruelly all day,
And makes her count and calls her 'Miss'
Until she fades away.

The righteous minds of innkeepers
Induce them now and then
To crack a bottle with a friend,
Or treat unmoneyed men;
But who hath seen the Grocer
Treat housemaids to his teas
Or crack a bottle of fish-sauce
Or stand a man a cheese?

He sells us sands of Araby
As sugar for cash down;
He sweeps his shop and sells the dust
The purest salt in town,
He crams with cans of poisoned meat
Poor subjects of the King,
And when they die by thousands
Why, he laughs like anything.

The wicked Grocer groces
In spirits and in wine,
Not frankly and in fellowship
As men in inns do dine;
But packed with soap and sardines
And carried off by grooms,
For to be snatched by Duchesses
And drunk in dressing-rooms.

The hell-instructed Grocer
Has a temple made of tin,
And the ruin of good innkeepers
Is loudly urged therein;
But now the sands are running out
From sugar of a sort,
The Grocer trembles; for his time,
Just like his weight, is short."

Captain Dalroy was getting considerably heated with his nautical liquor, and his appreciation of

Pump's song was not merely noisy but active. He leapt to his feet and waved his glass. "Ye ought to be Poet Laureate, Hump—ye're right, ye're right; we'll stand all this no longer!"

He dashed wildly up the sand slope and pointed with the signpost towards the darkening shore, where the low shed of corrugated iron stood almost isolated.

"There's your tin temple!" he said. "Let's burn it!" . . .

Mr. Humphrey Pump gravely took the paper from his pocket, on which he had previously inscribed the sin and desolation of grocers; and felt in another of his innumerable pockets for a pencil.

"Hallo," cried Dalroy, "are you going to have a shy at the Ballad of Quoodle?"

Quoodle lifted his ears at his name. Mr. Pump smiled a slight and embarrassed smile. He was secretly proud of Dalroy's admiration for his previous literary attempt, and he had some natural knack for verse as a game, as he had for all games; and his reading, though desultory, had not been merely rustic or low.

"On condition," he said deprecatingly, "that you write a song for the English."

"Oh, very well," said Patrick, with a huge sigh that really indicated the very opposite of reluctance. "We must do something till the thing stops, I suppose, and this seems a blameless parlour game. 'Songs of the Car Club.' Sounds quite aristocratic."

And he began to make marks with a pencil on the fly-leaf of a little book he had in his pocket—Wilson's "Noctes Ambroisianæ." Every now and then, however, he looked up and delayed his own composition by watching Pump and the dog; whose proceedings amused him very much. For the owner of "The Old Ship" sat sucking his pencil and looking at

A Gleaming Cohort

St. George he is for England,
And shall wear the shield he wore
When we go out in armour
With the battle-cross before.
But though he is jolly company
And very pleased to dine,
It isn't safe to give him nuts
Unless you give him wine."

"Very philosophical song that," said Dalroy, shaking his head solemnly, "full of deep thought. I really think that is about the truth of the matter in the case of the Englishman. Your enemies say you're stupid; and you boast of being illogical—which is about the only thing you do that really is stupid. As if anybody ever made an Empire or anything else by saying that two and two make five. Or as if anyone was ever the stronger for *not* understanding anything—if it were only tip-cat or chemistry. But this *is* true about you, Hump. You English are supremely an artistic people; and therefore you go by associations, as I said in my song. You won't have one thing without the other thing that goes with it. And as you can't imagine a village without a squire and parson, or a college without port and old oak, you get the reputation of a conservative people. But it's because you're sensitive, Hump, not because you're stupid, that you won't part with things. It's lies, lies and flattery, they tell you, Hump, when they tell you you're fond of compromise. I tell ye, Hump, every real revolution is a compromise. D'ye think Wolfe Tone or Charles Stewart Parnell never compromised? But it's just because you're afraid of a compromise that you won't have a revolution."

XIII. The Red Angel

I FIND that there really are human beings who think fairy tales bad for children. I do not speak of the man in the green tie, for him I can never count truly human. But a lady has written me an earnest letter saying that fairy tales ought not to be taught to children even if they are true. She says that it is cruel to tell children fairy tales, because it frightens them. You might just as well say that it is cruel to give girls sentimental novels because it makes them cry. All this kind of talk is based on that complete forgetting of what a child is like which has been the firm foundation of so many educational schemes. If you kept bogies and goblins away from children they would make them up for themselves. One small child in the dark can invent more hells than Swedenborg. One small child can imagine monsters too big and black to get into any picture, and give them names too unearthly and cacophonous to have occurred in the cries of any lunatic. The child, to begin with, commonly likes horrors, and he continues to indulge in them even when he does not like them. There is just as much difficulty in saying exactly where pure pain begins in his case, as there is in ours when we walk of our own free will into the torture-chamber of a great tragedy. The fear does not come from fairy tales; the fear comes from the universe of the soul.

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The timidity of the child or the savage is entirely reasonable; they are alarmed at this world, because

this world is a very alarming place. They dislike being alone because it is verily and indeed an awful idea to be alone. Barbarians fear the unknown for the same reason that Agnostics worship it—because it is a fact. Fairy tales, then, are not responsible for producing in children fear, or any of the shapes of fear; fairy tales do not give the child the idea of the evil or the ugly; that is in the child already, because it is in the world already. Fairy tales do not give a child his first idea of bogey. What fairy tales give the child is his first clear idea of the possible defeat of bogey. The baby has known the dragon intimately ever since he had an imagination. What the fairy tale provides for him is a St. George to kill the dragon.

Exactly what the fairy tale does is this: it accustoms him by a series of clear pictures to the idea that these limitless terrors have a limit, that these shapeless enemies have enemies, that these infinite enemies of man have enemies in the knights of God, that there is something in the universe more mystical than darkness, and stronger than strong fear. When I was a child I have stared at the darkness until the whole black bulk of it turned into one negro giant taller than heaven. If there was one star in the sky it only made him a Cyclops. But fairy tales restored my mental health. For next day I read an authentic account of how a negro giant with one eye, of quite equal dimensions, had been baffled by a little boy like myself (of similar inexperience and even lower social status) by means of a sword, some bad riddles, and a brave heart. Sometimes the sea at night seemed as dreadful as any dragon. But then I was acquainted with many youngest sons and little tailors to whom a dragon or two was as simple as the sea.

Take the most horrible of Grimm's tales in incident and imagery, the excellent tale of the "Boy who Could not Shudder," and you will see what I mean.

There are some living shocks in that tale. I remember specially a man's legs which fell down the chimney by themselves and walked about the room, until they were rejoined by the severed head and body which fell down the chimney after them. That is very good. But the point of the story and the point of the reader's feelings is not that these things were frightening, but the far more striking fact that the hero was not frightened of them. The most fearful of all these fearful wonders was his own absence of fear. He slapped the bogies on the back and asked the devils to drink wine with him; many a time in my youth, when stifled with some modern morbidity, I have prayed for a double portion of his spirit. If you have not read the end of his story, go and read it; it is the wisest thing in the world. The hero was at last taught to shudder by taking a wife, who threw a pail of cold water over him. In that one sentence there is more of the real meaning of marriage than in all the books about sex that cover Europe and America.

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At the four corners of a child's bed stand Perseus and Roland, Sigurd and St. George. If you withdraw the guard of heroes you are not making him rational: you are only leaving him to fight the devils alone. For the devils, alas, we have always believed in. The hopeful element in the universe has in modern times continually been denied and reasserted; but the hopeless element has never for a moment been denied. As I told "H. N. B." (whom I pause to wish a Happy Christmas in its most superstitious sense), the one thing modern people really do believe in is damnation. The greatest of purely modern poets summed up the really modern attitude in that fine agnostic line—

There may be Heaven; there must be Hell.

A Gleaming Cohort

The gloomy view of the universe has been a continuous tradition; and the new types of spiritual investigation or conjecture all begin by being gloomy. A little while ago men believed in no spirits. Now they are beginning rather slowly to believe in rather slow spirits.

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Some people objected to spiritualism, table rapping, and such things, because they were undignified, because the ghosts cracked jokes or waltzed with dinner-tables. I do not share this objection in the least. I wish the spirits were more farcical than they are. That they should make more jokes, and better ones, would be my suggestion. For almost all the spiritualism of our time, in so far as it is new, is solemn and sad. Some Pagan gods were lawless, and some Christian saints were a little too serious; but the spirits of modern spiritualism are both lawless and serious—a disgusting combination. The specially contemporary spirits are not only devils, they are blue devils. This is, first and last, the real value of Christmas; in so far as the mythology remains at all it is a kind and happy mythology. Personally of course, I believe in Santa Claus; but it is the season of forgiveness, and I will forgive others for not doing so. But if there is anyone who does not comprehend the defect in our world which I am criticizing, I should recommend him, for instance, to read a story by Mr. Henry James, called "The Turn of the Screw." It is one of the most powerful things ever written, and it is one of the things about which it is most permissible to doubt whether it ought ever to have been written at all. It describes two innocent children gradually growing at once omniscient and half-witted under the influence of the foul ghosts of a groom and a governess. As I say, I doubt whether Mr. Henry James ought to have published it (no, it i

not indecent, do not buy it; it is a spiritual matter), but I think the question so doubtful that I will give that truly great man a chance. I will approve the thing as well as admire it if he will write another tale just as powerful about two children and Santa Claus. If he will not, or cannot, then the conclusion is clear. We can deal strongly with gloomy mystery, but not with happy mystery; we are not rationalists, but diabolists.

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I have thought vaguely of all this staring at a great red fire that stands up in the room like a great red angel. But, perhaps, you have never heard of a red angel. But you have heard of a blue devil. That is exactly what I mean.

XIV. The Fool

FOR many years I had sought him, and at last I found him in a club. I had been told that he was everywhere; but I had almost begun to think that he was nowhere. I had been assured that there were millions of him; but before my late discovery I inclined to think that there were none of him. After my late discovery I am sure that there is one; and I incline to think that there are several, say, a few hundreds, but unfortunately most of them occupying important positions. When I say "him," I mean the entire idiot.

I have never been able to discover that "stupid public" of which so many literary men complain. The people one actually meets in trains or at tea-parties seem to me quite bright and interesting; certainly quite enough so to call for the full exertion of one's own wits. And even when I have heard brilliant "conversationalists" conversing with other people, the conversation had much more equality and give and take than this age of intellectual snobs will admit. I have sometimes felt tired, like other people; but rather tired with men's talk and variety than with their stolidity or sameness; therefore it was that I sometimes longed to find the refreshment of a single fool.

But it was denied me. Turn where I would I found this monotonous brilliancy of the general intelligence, this ruthless, ceaseless sparkle of humour and good sense. The "mostly fools" theory has been used in an anti-democratic sense; but when I

found at last my priceless ass, I did not find him in what is commonly called the democracy; nor in the aristocracy either. The man of the democracy generally talks quite rationally, sometimes on the anti-democratic side, but always with an idea of giving reasons for what he says and referring to the realities of his experience Nor is it the aristocracy that is stupid; at least, not that section of the aristocracy which represents it in politics. They are often cynical, especially about money, but even their boredom tends to make them a little eager for any real information or originality. If a man like Mr. Winston Churchill or Mr. Wyndham made up his mind for any reason to attack Syndicalism he would find out what it was first. Not so the man I found in the club.

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He was very well dressed; he had a heavy but handsome face; his black clothes suggested the City and his grey moustaches the Army; but the whole suggested that he did not really belong to either, but was one of those who dabble in shares and who play at soldiers. There was some third element about him that was neither mercantile nor military. His manners were a shade too gentlemanly to be quite those of a gentleman. They involved an unction and over-emphasis of the club-man: and I suddenly remembered feeling the same thing in some old actors or old playgoers who had modelled themselves on actors. As I came in he said, "If I was the Government," and then put a cigar in his mouth which he lit carefully with long intakes of breath. Then he took the cigar out of his mouth again and said, "I'd give it 'em," as if it were quite a separate sentence. But even while his mouth was stopped with the cigar his companion or interlocutor leaped to his feet and

said with great heartiness, snatching up a hat, "Well, I must be off. Tuesday!" I dislike these dark suspicions, but I certainly fancied I recognized the sudden geniality with which one takes leave of a bore.

When, therefore, he removed the narcotic stopper from his mouth it was to me that he addressed the belated epigram, "I'd give it 'em."

"What would you give them," I asked, "the minimum wage?"

"I'd give them beans," he said. "I'd shoot 'em down—shoot 'em down, every man Jack of them. I lost my best train yesterday, and here's the whole country paralysed, and here's a handful of obstinate fellows standing between the country and coal. I'd shoot 'em down!"

"That would surely be a little harsh," I pleaded. "After all, they are not under martial law, though I suppose two or three of them have commissions in the Yeomanry."

"Commissions in the Yeomanry!" he repeated, and his eyes and face, which became startling and separate, like those of a boiled lobster, made me feel sure that he had something of the kind himself.

"Besides," I continued, "wouldn't it be quite enough to confiscate their money?"

"Well, I'd send them all to penal servitude, anyhow," he said, "and I'd confiscate their funds as well."

"The policy is daring and full of difficulty," I replied, "but I do not say that it is wholly outside the extreme rights of the republic. But you must remember that though the facts of property have become quite fantastic, yet the sentiment of property still exists. These coal-owners, though they have not earned the mines, though they could not work the mines, do quite honestly feel that they own the mines. Hence your suggestion of shooting them

down, or even of confiscating their property, raises very——"

"What do you mean?" asked the man with the cigar, with a bullying eye. "Who yer talking about?"

"I'm talking about what you were talking about," I replied; "as you put it so perfectly, about the handful of obstinate fellows who are standing between the country and the coal. I mean the men who are selling their own coal for fancy prices, and who, as long as they can get those prices, care as little for national starvation as most merchant princes and pirates have cared for the provinces that were wasted or the peoples that were enslaved just before their ships came home. But though I am a bit of a revolutionist myself, I cannot quite go with you in the extreme violence you suggest. You say——"

"I say," he cried, bursting through my speech with a really splendid energy like that of some noble beast, "I say I'd take all these blasted miners and——"

I had risen slowly to my feet, for I was profoundly moved; and I stood staring at that mental monster.

"Oh," I said, "so it is the *miners* who are all to be sent to penal servitude, so that we may get more coal. It is the *miners* who are to be shot dead, every man Jack of them; for if once they are all shot dead they will start mining again. . . . You must forgive me, sir; I know I seem somewhat moved. . . . The fact is, I have just found something . . . something I have been looking for for years."

"Well," he asked, with no unfriendly stare, "and what have you found?"

"No," I answered, shaking my head sadly, "I do not think it would be quite kind to tell you what I have found."

He had a hundred virtues, including the capital

virtue of good humour, and we had no difficulty in changing the subject and forgetting the disagreement. He talked about society, his town friends and his country sports, and I discovered in the course of it that he was a county magistrate, a Member of Parliament, and a director of several important companies. He was also that other thing, which I did not tell him.

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The moral is that a certain sort of person does exist, to whose glory this article is dedicated. He is not the ordinary man. He is not the miner, who is sharp enough to ask for the necessities of existence. He is not the mine-owner, who is sharp enough to get a great deal more, by selling his coal at the best possible moment. He is not the aristocratic politician, who has a cynical but a fair sympathy with both economic opportunities. But he is the man who appears in scores of public places open to the upper middle class or (that less known but more powerful section) the lower upper class. Men like this all over the country are really saying whatever comes into their heads in their capacities of justice of the peace, candidate for Parliament, Colonel of the Yeomanry, old family doctor, Poor Law guardian, coroner, or, above all, arbiter in trade disputes. He suffers, in the literal sense, from softening of the brain; he has softened it by always taking the view of everything most comfortable for his country, his class, and his private personality. He is a deadly public danger. But as I have given him his name at the beginning of this article there is no need for me to repeat it at the end.

XV. The Orthodox Barber

THOSE thinkers who cannot believe in any gods often assert that the love of humanity would be in itself sufficient for them: and so, perhaps, it would, if they had it. There is a very real thing which may be called the love of humanity; in our time it exists almost entirely among those that are called uneducated people; and it does not exist at all among the people who talk about it.

A positive pleasure in being in the presence of any other human being is chiefly remarkable, for instance, in the masses on Bank Holiday; that is why they are so much nearer Heaven (despite appearances) than any other part of our population.

I remember seeing a crowd of factory girls getting into an empty train at a wayside country station. There were about twenty of them; they all got into one carriage; and they left all the rest of the train entirely empty. That is the real love of humanity. That is the definite pleasure in the immediate proximity of one's own kind. Only this coarse, rank, real love of men seems to be entirely lacking in those who propose the love of humanity as a substitute for all other love; honourable, rationalistic idealists.

I can well remember the explosion of human joy which marked the sudden starting of that train; all the factory girls who could not find seats (and they must have been the majority) relieving their feelings by jumping up and down. Now I have never seen any rationalistic idealists do this. I have never seen twenty modern philosophers crowd into one third-

class carriage for the mere pleasure of being together. I have never seen twenty Mr. McCabes all in one carriage and all jumping up and down.

Some people express a fear that vulgar trippers will overrun all beautiful places, such as Hampstead or Burnham Beeches. But their fear is unreasonable because trippers always prefer to trip together; they pack as close as they can; they have a suffocating passion of philanthropy.

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But among the minor and milder aspects of the same principle, I have no hesitation in placing the problem of the colloquial barber. Before any modern man talks with authority about loving men, I insist (I insist with violence) that he shall always be very much pleased when his barber tries to talk to him. His barber is humanity: let him love that. If he is not pleased at this, I will not accept any substitute in the way of interest in the Congo or in the future of Japan. If a man cannot love his barber, whom he has seen, how shall he love the Japanese whom he has not seen?

It is urged against the barber that he begins by talking about the weather; so do all dukes and diplomatists, only that they talk about it with ostentatious fatigue and indifference, whereas the barber talks about it with an astonishing, nay incredible, freshness of interest. It is objected to him that he tells people that they are going bald. That is to say, his very virtues are cast up against him; he is blamed because, being a specialist, he is a sincere specialist, and because, being a tradesman, he is not entirely a slave. But if the reader really objects to the conversation of barbers, there is one method of escape which I can easily recommend and not unfrequently adopt; that is, to do all the talking

yourself, as in the following case. The following scene between me and a human (I trust), living barber really took place a few days ago.

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I had been invited to some At Home to meet the Colonial Premiers, and lest I should be mistaken for some partly reformed bush-ranger out of the interior of Australia I went into a shop in the Strand to get shaved. While I was undergoing the torture the man said to me:

"There seems to be a lot in the papers about this new shaving, sir. It seems you can shave yourself with anything—with a stick or a stone or a pole or a poker" (here I began for the first time to detect a sarcastic intonation) "or a shovel or a——"

Here he hesitated for a word, and I, although I knew nothing about the matter, helped him out with suggestions in the same rhetorical vein.

"Or a button-hook," I said, "or a blunderbuss or a battering-ram or a piston-rod——"

He resumed, refreshed with this assistance, "Or a curtain rod or a candle-stick or a——"

"Cow-catcher," I suggested eagerly, and we continued in this ecstatic duet for some time. Then I asked him what it was all about, and he told me. He explained the thing eloquently and at length.

"The funny part of it is," he said, "that the thing isn't new at all. It's been talked about ever since I was a boy, and long before. There was always a notion that the razor might be done without somehow. But none of those schemes ever came to anything; and I don't believe myself that this will."

"Why, as to that," I said, rising slowly from the chair and trying to put on my coat inside out, "I don't know how it may be in the case of you and your new shaving. Shaving, with all respect to you, is a

trivial and materialistic thing, and in such things startling inventions are sometimes made. But what you say reminds me in some dark and dreamy fashion of something else. I recall it especially when you tell me, with such evident experience and sincerity, that the new shaving is not really new. My friend, the human race is always trying this dodge of making everything entirely easy; but the difficulty which it shifts off one thing it shifts on to another. If one man has not the toil of preparing a man's chin, I suppose that some other man has the toil of preparing something very curious to put on a man's chin. It would be nice if we could be shaved without troubling anybody. It would be nicer still if we could go unshaved without annoying anybody—

> 'But, O wise friend, chief Barber of the Strand,
> Brother, nor you nor I have made the world.'

Whoever made it, who is wiser, and we hope better than we, made it under strange limitations, and with painful conditions of pleasure.

"In the first and darkest of its books it is fiercely written that a man shall not eat his cake and have it; and though all men talked until the stars were old it would still be true that a man who had shaved had lost his beard, and that a man who had lost his razor could not shave with it. But every now and then men jump up with the new something or other and say that everything can be had without sacrifice, that bad is good if you are only enlightened, and that there is no real difference between being shaved and not being shaved. The difference, they say, is only a difference of degree; everything is evolutionary and relative. Shavedness is immanent in man. Every tenpenny nail is a Potential Razor. The superstitious people of the past (they say) believed

that a lot of black bristles standing out at right angles to one's face was a positive affair. But the higher criticism teaches us better. Bristles are merely negative. They are a Shadow where Shaving should be.

"Well, it all goes on, and I suppose it all means something. But a baby is the Kingdom of God, and if you try to kiss a baby he will know whether you are shaved or not. Perhaps I am mixing up being shaved and being saved; my democratic sympathies have always led me to drop my 'h's.' In another moment I may suggest that goats represent the lost because goats have long beards. This is growing altogether too allegorical.

"Nevertheless," I added, as I paid the bill, "I have really been profoundly interested in what you told me about the New Shaving. Have you ever heard of a thing called the New Theology?"

He smiled and said that he had not.

XVI. The Angry Street: A Bad Dream

I CANNOT remember whether this tale is true or not. If I read it through very carefully I have a suspicion that I should come to the conclusion that it is not. But, unfortunately, I cannot read it through very carefully, because, you see, it is not written yet. The image and idea of it clung to me through a great part of my boyhood; I may have dreamt it before I could talk; or told it to myself before I could read; or read it before I could remember. On the whole, however, I am certain that I did not read it. For children have very clear memories about things like that; and of the books of which I was really fond I can still remember not only the shape and bulk and binding, but even the position of the printed words on many of the pages. On the whole, I incline to the opinion that it happened to me before I was born.

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At any rate, let us tell the story now with all the advantages of the atmosphere that has clung to it. You may suppose me, for the sake of argument, sitting at lunch in one of those quick-lunch restaurants in the City where men take their food so fast that it has none of the quality of food, and take their half-hour's vacation so fast that it has none of the qualities of leisure. To hurry through one's leisure is the most unbusiness-like of actions. They all wore tall shiny hats as if they could not lose an instant even to hang them on a peg, and they all had one

eye a little off, hypnotized by the huge eye of the clock. In short they were the slaves of the modern bondage, you could hear their fetters clanking. Each was, in fact, bound by a chain; the heaviest chain ever tied to a man—it is called a watch-chain.

Now, among these there entered and sat down opposite to me a man who almost immediately opened an uninterrupted monologue. He was like all the other men in dress, yet he was startingly opposite to them all in manner. He wore a high shiny hat and a long frock coat, but he wore them as such solemn things were meant to be worn; he wore the silk hat as if it were a mitre, and the frock coat as if it were the ephod of a high priest. He not only hung his hat up on the peg, but he seemed (such was his stateliness) almost to ask permission of the hat for doing so, and to apologize to the peg for making use of it. When he had sat down on a wooden chair with the air of one considering its feelings and given a sort of slight stoop or bow to the wooden table itself, as if it were an altar, I could not help some comment springing to my lips. For the *man was a big, sanguine-faced, prosperous-looking* man, and yet he treated everything with a care that almost amounted to nervousness.

For the sake of saying something to express my interest I said, "This furniture is fairly solid; but, of course, people do treat it much too carelessly."

As I looked up doubtfully my eye caught his, and was fixed as his was fixed, in an apocalyptic stare. I had thought him ordinary as he entered, save for his strange, cautious manner; but if the other people had seen him then they would have screamed and emptied the room. They did not see him, and they went on making a clatter with their forks, and a murmur with their conversation. But the man's face was the face of a maniac.

"Did you mean anything particular by that remark?" he asked at last and the blood crawled back slowly into his face.

"Nothing whatever," I answered. "One does not mean anything here; it spoils people's digestions."

He leaned back and wiped his broad forehead with a big handkerchief; and yet there seemed to be a sort of regret in his relief.

"I thought perhaps," he said in a low voice, "that another of them had gone wrong."

"If you mean another digestion gone wrong," I said, "I never heard of one here that went right. This is the heart of the Empire, and the other organs are in an equally bad way."

"No, I mean another street gone wrong," he said heavily and quietly, "but as I suppose that doesn't explain much to you, I think I shall have to tell you the story. I do so with all the less responsibility, because I know you won't believe it. For forty years of my life I invariably left my office which is in Leadenhall Street, at half-past five in the afternoon, taking with me an umbrella in the right hand and a bag in the left hand. For forty years two months and four days I passed out of the side office door, walked down the street on the left hand side, took the first turning to the left and the third to the right, from where I bought an evening paper, followed the road on the right-hand side round two obtuse angles, and came out just outside a Metropolitan station, where I took a train home. For forty years two months and four days I fulfilled this course by accumulated habit: it was not a long street that I traversed, and it took me about four and a half minutes to do it. After forty years two months and four days, on the fifth day I went out in the same manner, with my umbrella in the right hand and my bag in the left, and I began to notice that walking

along the familiar street tired me somewhat more than usual. At first I thought I must be breathless and out of condition; though this, again, seemed unnatural, as my habits had always been like clockwork. But after a little while I became convinced that the road was distinctly on a more steep incline than I had known previously; I was positively panting uphill. Owing to this no doubt the corner of the street seemed further off than usual; and when I turned it I was convinced that I had turned down the wrong one. For now the street shot up quite a steep slant, such as one only sees in the hilly parts of London, and in this part there were no hills at all. Yet it was not the wrong street. The name written on it was the same; the shuttered shops were the same; the lamp-posts and the whole look of the perspective was the same; only it was tilted upwards like a lid. Forgetting any trouble about breathlessness or fatigue I ran furiously forward, and reached the second of my accustomed turnings, which ought to bring me almost within sight of the station. And as I turned that corner I nearly fell on the pavement. For now the street went up straight in front of my face like a steep staircase or the side of a pyramid. There was not for miles round that place so much as a slope like that of Ludgate Hill. And this was a slope like that of the Matterhorn. The whole street had lifted itself like a single wave, and yet every speck and detail of it was the same, and I saw in the high distance, as at the top of an Alpine pass, picked out in pink letters the name over my paper shop.

"I ran on and on blindly now, passing all the shops, and coming to a part of the road where there was a long grey row of private houses. I had, I know not why, an irrational feeling that I was on a long iron bridge in empty space. An impulse seized me, and I pulled up the iron trap of a coal hole.

Looking down through it I saw empty space and the stars.

"When I looked up again a man was standing in his front garden, having apparently come out of his house; he was leaning over the railings and gazing at me. We were all alone on that nightmare road; his face was in shadow; his dress was dark and ordinary; but when I saw him standing so perfectly still I knew somehow that he was not of this world And the stars behind his head were larger and fiercer than ought to be endured by the eyes of men.

"'If you are a kind angel,' I said, 'or a wise devil or have anything in common with mankind, tell me what is this street possessed of devils.'

"After a long silence he said, 'What do you say that it is?'

"'It is Bumpton Street, of course,' I snapped 'It goes to Oldgate Station.'

"'Yes,' he admitted gravely; 'it goes there sometimes. Just now, however, it is going to heaven.'

"'To heaven?' I said. 'Why?'

"'It is going to heaven for justice,' he replied. 'You must have treated it badly. Remember always that there is one thing that cannot be endured by anybody or anything. That one unendurable thing is to be overworked and also neglected. For instance, you can overwork women—everybody does. But you can't neglect women—I defy you to. At the same time, you can neglect tramps and gipsies and all the apparent refuse of the State, so long as you do not overwork them. But no beast of the field, no horse, no dog can endure long to be asked to do more than his work and yet have less than his honour. It is the same with streets. You have worked this street to death, and yet you have never remembered its existence. If you had owned it

healthy democracy, even of pagans, they would have hung this street with garlands and given it the name of a god. Then it would have gone quietly. But at last the street has grown tired of your tireless insolence; and it is bucking and rearing its head to heaven. Have you never sat on a bucking horse?'

"I looked at the long grey street, and for a moment it seemed to me to be exactly like the long grey neck of a horse flung up to heaven. But in a moment my sanity returned, and I said, 'But this is all nonsense. Streets go to the place they have to go to. A street must always go to its end.'

"'Why do you think so of a street?' he asked, standing very still.

"'Because I have always seen it do the same thing,' I replied, in reasonable anger. 'Day after day, year after year, it has always gone to Oldgate Station; day after . . .'

"I stopped, for he had flung up his head with the fury of the road in revolt.

"'And you?' he cried terribly. 'What do you think the road thinks of you? Does the road think you are alive? Are you alive! Day after day, year after year, *you* have gone to Oldgate Station . . .' Since then I have respected the things called inanimate."

And bowing slightly to the mustard-pot, the man in the restaurant withdrew.

XVII. The Shop of Ghosts: A Good Dream

NEARLY all the best and most precious things in the universe you can get for a halfpenny. I make an exception, of course, of the sun, the moon, the earth, people, stars, thunderstorms, and such trifles. You can get them for nothing. But the general principle will be at once apparent. In the street behind me, for instance, you can now get a ride on an electric tram for a halfpenny. To be on an electric tram is to be on a flying castle in a fairy tale. You can get quite a large number of brightly coloured sweets for a halfpenny.

But if you want to see what a vast and bewildering array of valuable things you can get at a halfpenny each, you should do as I was doing last night. I was gluing my nose against the glass of a very small and dimly lit toy-shop in one of the greyest and leanest of the streets of Battersea. But dim as was that square of light, it was filled (as a child once said to me) with all the colours God ever made. Those toys of the poor were like the children who buy them; they were all dirty; but they were all bright. For my part, I think brightness more important than cleanliness; since the first is of the soul, and the second of the body. You must excuse me; I am a democrat; I know I am out of fashion in the modern world.

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As I looked at that palace of pigmy wonders, at small green omnibuses, at small blue elephants, at small black dolls, and small red Noah's arks, I must

have fallen into some sort of unnatural trance. That lit shop-window became like the brilliantly lit stage when one is watching some highly coloured comedy. I forgot the grey houses and the grimy people behind me as one forgets the dark galleries and the dim crowds at a theatre. It seemed as if the little objects behind the glass were small, not because they were toys, but because they were objects far away. The green omnibus was really a green omnibus, a green Bayswater omnibus, passing across some huge desert on its ordinary way to Bayswater. The blue elephant was no longer blue with paint; he was blue with distance. The black doll was really a negro relieved against passionate tropic foliage in the land where every weed is flaming and only man is black. The red Noah's ark was really the enormous ship of earthly salvation riding on the rain-swollen sea, red in the first morning of hope.

Every one, I suppose, knows such stunning instants of abstraction, such brilliant blanks in the mind. In such moments one can see the face of one's own best friend as an unmeaning pattern of spectacles or moustaches. They are commonly marked by the two signs of the slowness of their growth and the suddenness of their termination. The return to real thinking is often as abrupt as bumping into a man. Very often indeed (in my case) it is bumping into a man. But in any case the awakening is always emphatic and, generally speaking, it is always complete. Now, in this case, I did come back with a shock of sanity to the consciousness that I was, after all, only staring into a dingy little toy-shop; but in some strange way the mental cure did not seem to be final. There was still in my mind an unmanageable something that told me that I had strayed into some odd atmosphere, or that I had already done some odd thing. I felt as if I had worked a miracle or com-

mitted a sin. It was as if I had (at any rate) stepped across some border in the soul.

To shake off this dangerous and dreamy sense I went into the shop and tried to buy wooden soldiers. The man in the shop was very old and broken, with confused white hair covering his head and half his face, hair so startlingly white that it looked almost artificial. Yet though he was senile and even sick, there was nothing of suffering in his eyes; he looked rather as if he were gradually falling asleep in a not unkindly decay. He gave me the wooden soldiers, but when I put down the money he did not at first seem to see it; then he blinked at it feebly, and then he pushed it feebly away.

"No, no," he said vaguely. "I never have. I never have. We are rather old-fashioned here."

"Not taking money," I replied, "seems to me more like an uncommonly new fashion than an old one."

"I never have," said the old man, blinking and blowing his nose; "I've always given presents. I'm too old to stop."

"*Good heavens!*" I said. "*What can you mean?* Why, you might be Father Christmas."

"I am Father Christmas," he said apologetically, and blew his nose again.

The lamps could not have been lighted yet in the street outside. At any rate, I could see nothing against the darkness but the shining shop-window. There were no sounds of steps or voices in the street; I might have strayed into some new and sunless world. But something had cut the cords of common sense, and I could not feel even surprise except sleepily. Something made me say, "You look ill, Father Christmas."

"I am dying," he said.

I did not speak, and it was he who spoke again.

"All the new people have left my shop. I cannot

understand it. They seem to object to me on such curious and inconsistent sort of grounds, these scientific men, and these innovators. They say that I give people superstitions and make them too visionary ; they say I give people sausages and make them too coarse. They say my heavenly parts are too heavenly ; they say my earthly parts are too earthly ; I don't know what they want, I'm sure. How can heavenly things be too heavenly, or earthly things too earthly ? How can one be too good, or too jolly ? I don't understand. But I understand one thing well enough. These modern people are living and I am dead."

"You may be dead," I replied. "You ought to know. But as for what they are doing—do not call it living."

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A silence fell suddenly between us which I somehow expected to be unbroken. But it had not fallen for more than a few seconds when, in the utter stillness, I distinctly heard a very rapid step coming nearer and nearer along the street. The next moment a figure flung itself into the shop and stood framed in the doorway. He wore a large white hat tilted back as if in impatience ; he had tight bright old-fashioned pantaloons, a gaudy old-fashioned stock and waistcoat, and an old fantastic coat. He had large wide-open luminous eyes like those of an arresting actor ; he had a fiery, nervous face, and a fringe of beard. He took in the shop and the old man in a look that seemed literally a flash and uttered the exclamation of a man utterly staggered.

"Good lord," he cried out, "it can't be you ! It isn't you ! I came to ask where your grave was."

"I'm not dead yet, Mr. Dickens," said the old gentleman, with a feeble smile ; "but I'm dying," he hastened to add reassuringly.

"But, dash it all, you were dying in my time," said Mr. Charles Dickens with animation; "and you don't look a day older."

"I've felt like this for a long time," said Father Christmas.

Mr. Dickens turned his back and put his head out of the door into the darkness.

"Dick," he roared at the top of his voice, "he's still alive."

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Another shadow darkened the doorway, and a much larger and more full-blooded gentleman in an enormous periwig came in, fanning his flushed face with a military hat of the cut of Queen Anne. He carried his head well back like a soldier, and his hot face had even a look of arrogance, which was suddenly contradicted by his eyes, which were literally as humble as a dog's. His sword made a great clatter, as if the shop were too small for it.

"Indeed," said Sir Richard Steele, "'tis a most prodigious matter, for the man was dying when we wrote about Sir Roger de Coverley and his Christmas Day."

My senses were growing dimmer and the room darker. It seemed to be filled with new-comers.

"It hath ever been understood," said a burly man, who carried his head humorously and obstinately a little on one side—I think he was Ben Jonson—"It hath ever been understood, consule Jacobo, under our King James and her late Majesty, that such good and hearty customs were fallen sick, and like to pass from the world. This grey beard most surely was no lustier when I knew him than now."

And I also thought I heard a green-clad man, like Robin Hood, say in some mixed Norman French, "But I saw the man dying."

"I have felt like this a long time," said Father Christmas, in his feeble way again.

Mr. Charles Dickens suddenly leant across to him.

"Since when?" he asked. "Since you were born?"

"Yes," said the old man, and sank shaking into a chair. "I have been always dying."

Mr. Dickens took off his hat with a flourish like a man calling a mob to rise.

"I understand it now," he cried, "you will never die."

XVIII. Street Cries and Stretching the Law

ABOUT a hundred years ago some enemy sowed among our people the heresy that it is more practical to use a corkscrew to open a sardine-tin, or to employ a door-scraper as a paper-weight. Practical politics came to mean the habit of using everything for some other purpose than its own ; of snatching up anything as a substitute for something else. A law that had been meant to do one thing, and had conspicuously failed to do it, was always excused because it might do something totally different and perhaps directly contrary. A custom that was supposed to keep everything white was allowed to survive on condition that it made everything black. In reality this is so far from being practical that it does not even rise to the dignity of being lazy. At the best it can only claim to save trouble, and it does not even do that. What it really means is that some people will take every other kind of trouble in the world, if they are saved the trouble of thinking. They will sit for hours trying to open a tin with a corkscrew, rather than make the mental effort of pursuing the abstract, academic, logical connexion between a corkscrew and a cork.

Here is an example of the sort of thing I mean, which I came across in a daily paper to-day. A headline announces in staring letters, and with startled notes of exclamation, that some abominable judicial authority has made the monstrous decision that musicians playing in the street are not beggars. The

journalist bitterly remarks that they may shove their hats under our very noses for money, but yet we must not call them beggars. He follows this remark with several notes of exclamation, and I feel inclined to add a few of my own. The most astonishing thing about the matter, to my mind, is that the journalist is quite innocent in his own indignation. It never so much as crosses his mind that organ-grinders are not classed as beggars because they are not beggars. They may be as much of a nuisance as beggars; they may demand special legislation like beggars; it may be right and proper for every philanthropist to stop them, starve them, harry them, and hound them to death just as if they were beggars. But they are not beggars, by any possible definition of begging. Nobody can be said to be a mere mendicant who is offering something in exchange for money, especially if it is something which some people like and are willing to pay for. A street singer is no more of a mendicant than Madame Clara Butt, though the method (and the scale) of remuneration differs more or less. Anybody who sells anything, in the streets or in the shops, is begging in the sense of begging people to buy. Mr. Selfridge is begging people to buy; the Imperial International Universal Cosmic Stores is begging people to buy. The only possible definition of the actual beggar is not that he is begging people to buy, but that he has nothing to sell.

Now, it is interesting to ask ourselves what the newspaper really meant, when it was so wildly illogical in what it said. Superficially and as a matter of mood or feeling, we can all guess what was meant. The writer meant that street musicians looked very much like beggars, because they wore thinner and dirtier clothes than his own; and that he had grown quite used to people who looked like

that being treated anyhow and arrested for everything. That is a state of mind not uncommon among those whom economic security has kept as superficial as a varnish. But what was intellectually involved in his vague argument was more interesting. What he meant was, in that deeper sense, that it would be a great convenience if the law that punishes beggars could be *stretched* to cover people who are certainly not beggars, but who may be as much of a botheration as beggars. In other words, he wanted to use the mendicity laws in a matter quite unconnected with mendicity; but he wanted to use the old laws because it would save the trouble of making new laws—as the corkscrew would save the trouble of going to look for the tin-opener. And for this notion of the crooked and anomalous use of laws, for ends logically different from their own, he could, of course, find much support in the various sophists who have attacked reason in recent times. But, as I have said, it does not really save trouble; and it is becoming increasingly doubtful whether it will even save disaster. It used to be said that this rough-and-ready method made the country richer; but it will be found less and less consoling to explain why the country is richer when the country is steadily growing poorer. It will not comfort us in the hour of failure to listen to long and ingenious explanations of our success. The truth is that this sort of practical compromise has not led to practical success. The success of England came as the culmination of the highly logical and theoretical eighteenth century. The method was already beginning to fail by the time we came to the end of the compromising and constitutional nineteenth century. Modern scientific civilization was launched by logicians. It was only wrecked by practical men. Anyhow, by this time everybody in England has given up pretending to be particularly rich. It is,

therefore, no appropriate moment for proving that a course of being consistently unreasonable will always lead to riches.

In truth, it would be much more practical to be more logical. If street musicians are a nuisance, let them be legislated against for being a nuisance. If begging is really wrong, a logical law should be imposed on all beggars, and not merely on those whom particular persons happen to regard as being also nuisances. What this sort of opportunism does is simply to prevent any question being considered as a whole. I happen to think the whole modern attitude towards beggars is entirely heathen and inhuman. I should be prepared to maintain, as a matter of general morality, that it is intrinsically indefensible to punish human beings for asking for human assistance. I should say that it is intrinsically insane to urge people to give charity and forbid people to accept charity. Nobody is penalized for crying for help when he is drowning; why should he be penalized for crying for help when he is starving? Every one would expect to have to help a man to save his life in a shipwreck; why not a man who has suffered a shipwreck of his life? A man may be in such a position by no conceivable fault of his own; but in any case his fault is never urged against him in the parallel cases. A man is saved from shipwreck without inquiry about whether he has blundered in the steering of his ship; and we fish him out of a pond before asking whose fault it was that he fell into it. A striking social satire might be written about a man who was rescued again and again out of mere motives of humanity in all the wildest places of the world; who was heroically rescued from a lion and skilfully saved out of a sinking ship; who was sought out on a desert island and scientifically recovered from a deadly swoon; and who only found himself suddenly

deserted by all humanity when he reached the city that was his home.

In the ultimate sense, therefore, I do not myself disapprove of mendicants. Nor do I disapprove of musicians. It may not unfairly be retorted that this is because I am not a musician. I allow full weight to the fairness of the retort, but I cannot think it a good thing that even musicians should lose all their feelings except the feeling for music. And it may surely be said that a man must have lost most of his feelings if he does not feel the pathos of a barrel-organ in a poor street. But there are other feelings besides pathos covered by any comprehensive veto upon street music and minstrelsy. There are feelings of history, and even of patriotism. I have seen in certain rich and respectable quarters of London a notice saying that all street cries are forbidden. If there were a notice up to say that all old tombstones should be carted away like lumber, it would be rather less of an act of vandalism. Some of the old street cries of London are among the last links that we have with the London of Shakespeare and the London of Chaucer. When I meet a man who utters one I am so far from regarding him as a beggar; it is I who should be a beggar, and beg him to say it again.

But in any case it should be made clear that we cannot make one law do the work of another. If we have real reasons for forbidding something like a street cry, we should give the reasons that are real; we should forbid it because it is a cry, because it is a noise, because it is a nuisance, or, perhaps, according to our tastes, because it is old, because it is popular, because it is historic and a memory of Merry England. I suspect that the subconscious prejudice against it is rooted in the fact that the pedlar or hawker is one of the few free men left in the modern city; that he often sells his own wares directly to the consumer,

and does not pay rent for a shop. But if the modern spirit wishes to veto him, to harry him, or to hang, draw and quarter him for being free, at least let it so far recognize his dignity as to define him ; and let the law deal with him in principle as well as in practice.

XIX. The Terror of a Toy

IT would be too high and hopeful a compliment to say that the world is becoming absolutely babyish. For its chief weak-mindedness is an inability to appreciate the intelligence of babies. On every side we hear whispers and warnings that would have appeared half-witted to the Wise Men of Gotham. Only this Christmas I was told in a toy-shop that not so many bows and arrows were being made for little boys; because they were considered dangerous. It might in some circumstances be dangerous to have a little bow. It is always dangerous to have a little boy. But no other society, claiming to be sane, would have dreamed of supposing that you could abolish all bows unless you could abolish all boys. With the merits of the latter reform I will not deal here. There is a great deal to be said for such a course; and perhaps we shall soon have an opportunity of considering it. For the modern mind seems quite incapable of distinguishing between the means and the end, between the organ and the disease, between the use and the abuse; and would doubtless break the boy along with the bow, as it empties out the baby with the bath.

But let us, by way of a little study in this mournful state of things, consider this case of the dangerous toy. Now, the first and most self-evident truth is that, of all the things a child sees and touches, the most dangerous toy is about the least dangerous thing. There is hardly a single domestic utensil that is not much more dangerous than a little bow and

arrows. He can burn himself in the fire, he can boil himself in the bath, he can cut his throat with the carving-knife, he can scald himself with the kettle, he can choke himself with anything small enough, he can break his neck off anything high enough. He moves all day long amid a murderous machinery, as capable of killing and maiming as the wheels of the most frightful factory. He plays all day in a house fitted up with engines of torture like the Spanish Inquisition. And while he thus dances in the shadow of death, he is to be saved from all the perils of possessing a piece of string, tied to a bent bough or twig. When he is a little boy it generally takes him some time even to learn how to hold the bow. When he does hold it, he is delighted if the arrow flutters for a few yards like a feather or an autumn leaf. But even if he grows a little older and more skilful, and has yet not learned to despise arrows in favour of aeroplanes, the amount of damage he could conceivably do with his little arrows would be about one-hundredth part of the damage that he could always in any case have done by simply picking up a stone in the garden.

Now, you do not keep a little boy from throwing stones by preventing him from ever seeing stones. You do not do it by locking up all the stones in the Geological Museum, and only issuing tickets of admission to adults. You do not do it by trying to pick up all the pebbles on the beach, for fear he should practise throwing them into the sea. You do not even adopt so obvious and even pressing a social reform as forbidding roads to be made of anything but asphalt, or directing that all gardens shall be made on clay and none on gravel. You neglect all these great opportunities opening before you; you neglect all these inspiring vistas of social science and enlightenment. When you want to prevent a child

from throwing stones, you fall back on the stalest and most sentimental and even most superstitious methods. You do it by trying to preserve some reasonable authority and influence over the child. You trust to your private relation with the boy, and not to your public relation with the stone. And what is true of the natural missile is just as true, of course, of the artificial missile; especially as it is a very much more ineffectual and therefore innocuous missile. A man could be really killed, like St. Stephen, with the stones in the road. I doubt if he could be really killed, like St. Sebastian, with the arrows in the toy-shop. But anyhow the very plain principle is the same. If you can teach a child not to throw a stone, you can teach him when to shoot an arrow; if you cannot teach him anything, he will always have something to throw. If he can be persuaded not to smash the Archdeacon's hat with a heavy flint, it will probably be possible to dissuade him from transfixing that head-dress with a toy arrow. If his training deters him from heaving half a brick at the postman, it will probably also warn him against constantly loosening shafts of death against the policeman. But the notion that the child depends upon particular implements, labelled dangerous, in order to be a danger to himself and other people, is a notion so nonsensical that it is hard to see how any human mind can entertain it for a moment. The truth is that all sorts of faddism, both official and theoretical, have broken down the natural authority of the domestic institution, especially among the poor; and the faddists are now casting about desperately for a substitute for the thing they have themselves destroyed. The normal thing is for the parents to prevent a boy from doing more than a reasonable amount of damage with his bow and arrow, and, for the rest, to leave him to a reasonable enjoy-

ment of them. Officialism cannot thus follow the life of the individual boy, as can the individual guardian. You cannot appoint a particular policeman for each boy, to pursue him when he climbs trees or falls into ponds. So the modern spirit has descended to the indescribable mental degradation of trying to abolish the abuse of things by abolishing the things themselves; which is as if it were to abolish ponds or abolish trees. Perhaps it will have a try at that before long. Thus we have all heard of savages who try a tomahawk for murder, or burn a wooden club for the damage it has done to society. To such intellectual levels may the world return.

There are indeed yet lower levels. There is a story from America about a little boy who gave up his toy cannon to assist the disarmament of the world. I do not know if it is true, but on the whole I prefer to think so; for it is perhaps more tolerable to imagine one small monster who could do such a thing than many more mature monsters who could invent or admire it. There were some, doubtless, who neither invented nor admired. It is one of the peculiarities of the Americans that they combine a power of producing what they satirize as "sobstuff" with a parallel power of satirizing it. And of the two American tall stories, it is sometimes hard to say which is the story and which the satire. But it seems clear that some people did really repeat this story in a reverential spirit. And it marks, as I have said, another stage of cerebral decay. You can (with luck) break a window with a toy arrow; but you can hardly bombard a town with a toy gun. If people object to the mere model of a cannon, they must equally object to the picture of a cannon, and so to every picture in the world that depicts a sword or a spear. There would be a splendid clearance of all the great art-galleries of the world. But it would

be nothing to the destruction of all the great libraries of the world, if we logically extended the principle to all the literary masterpieces that admit the glory of arms. When this progress had gone on for a century or two, it might begin to dawn on people that there was something wrong with their moral principle. What is wrong with their moral principle is that it is immoral. Arms, like every other adventure or art of man, have two sides according as they are invoked for the infliction or the defiance of wrong. They have also an element of real poetry and an element of realistic and therefore repulsive prose. The child's symbolic sword and bow are simply the poetry without the prose; the good without the evil. The toy sword is the abstraction and emanation of the heroic, apart from all its horrible accidents. It is the soul of the sword, that will never be stained with blood.

XX. The Aristocratic 'Arry

THE Cheap Tripper, pursued by the curses of the æsthetes and the antiquaries, really is, I suppose, a symptom of the strange and almost unearthly ugliness of our diseased society. The costumes and customs of a hundred peasantries are there to prove that such ugliness does not necessarily follow from mere poverty, or mere democracy, or mere unlettered simplicity of mind.

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But though the tripper, artistically considered, is a sign of our decadence, he is not one of its worst signs, but relatively one of its best; one of its most innocent and most sincere. Compared with many of the philosophers and artists who denounce him, he looks like a God-fearing fisher or a noble mountaineer. His antics with donkeys and concertinas, crowded chars-à-bancs, and exchanged hats, though clumsy, are not so vicious or even so fundamentally vulgar as many of the amusements of the over-educated. People are not more crowded on a char-à-banc than they are at a political "At Home," or even an artistic soirée; and if the female trippers are overdressed, at least they are not overdressed and underdressed at the same time. It is better to ride a donkey than to be a donkey. It is better to deal with the Cockney festival which asks men and women to change hats, than with the modern Utopia that wants them to change heads.

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But the truth is that such small, but real, element of vulgarity as there is indeed in the tripper, is part of a certain folly and falsity which is characteristic of much modernity, and especially of the very people who persecute the poor tripper most. There is something in the whole society, and even especially in the cultured part of it, that does things in a clumsy and unbeautiful way.

A case occurs to me in the matter of Stonehenge, which I happened to visit lately. Now to a person really capable of feeling the poetry of Stonehenge it is almost a secondary matter whether he sees Stonehenge at all. The vast void roll of the empty land towards Salisbury, the grey tablelands like primeval altars, the trailing rain-clouds, the vapour of primeval sacrifices, would all tell him of a very ancient and very lonely Britain. It would not spoil his Druidic mood if he missed Stonehenge. But it does spoil his mood to find Stonehenge—surrounded by a brand-new fence of barbed wire, with a policeman, and a little shop selling picture post-cards.

Now, if you protest against this, educated people will instantly answer you, "Oh, it was done to prevent the vulgar trippers who chip stones and carve names and spoil the look of Stonehenge." It does not seem to occur to them that barbed wire and a policeman rather spoil the look of Stonehenge. The scratching of a name, particularly when performed with a blunt penknife or pencil by a person of imperfect School Board education, can be trusted in a little while to be indistinguishable from the greyest hieroglyphic by the grandest Druid of old. But nobody could get a modern policeman into the same picture with a Druid. This really vital piece of vandalism was done by the educated, not the uneducated; it was done by the influence of the artists or antiquaries who wanted to preserve the antique beauty of Stonehenge. It

seems to me curious to preserve your lady's beauty from freckles by blacking her face all over; or to protect the pure whiteness of your wedding garment by dyeing it green.

And if you ask, "But what else could anyone have done, what could the most artistic age have done, to save the monument?" I reply, "There are hundreds of things that Greeks or Mediævals might have done; and I have no notion what they would have chosen; but I say that by an instinct in their whole society they would have done something that was decent and serious and suitable to the place. Perhaps some family of knights or warriors would have the hereditary duty of guarding such a place. If so their armour would be appropriate; their tents would be appropriate; not deliberately—they would grow like that. Perhaps some religious order such as normally employ nocturnal watches and the relieving of guard would protect such a place. Perhaps it would be protected by all sorts of rituals, consecrations, or curses, which would seem to you mere raving superstition and silliness. But they do not seem to me one-twentieth part so silly, from a purely rationalist point of view, as calmly making a spot hideous in order to keep it beautiful."

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The thing that is really vulgar, the thing that is really vile, is to live in a good place without living by its life. Anyone who settles down in a place without becoming part of it is (barring peculiar personal cases, of course) a tripper or wandering cad. For instance, the Jew is a genuine peculiar case. The Wandering Jew is not a wandering cad. He is a highly civilized man in a highly difficult position; the world being divided, and his own nation being

divided, about whether he can do anything else except wander.

The best example of the cultured, but common, tripper is the educated Englishman on the Continent. We can no longer explain the quarrel by calling Englishmen rude and foreigners polite. Hundreds of Englishmen are extremely polite, and thousands of foreigners are extremely rude. The truth of the matter is that foreigners do not resent the rude Englishman. What they do resent, what they do most justly resent, is the polite Englishman. He visits Italy for Botticellis or Flanders for Rembrandts, and he treats the great nations that made these things courteously—as he would treat the custodians of any museum. It does not seem to strike him that the Italian is not the custodian of the pictures, but the creator of them. He can afford to look down on such nations—when he can paint such pictures.

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That is, in matters of art and travel, the psychology of the cad. If, living in Italy, you admire Italian art while distrusting Italian character, you are a tourist, or cad. If, living in Italy, you admire Italian art while despising Italian religion, you are a tourist, or cad. It does not matter how many years you have lived there. Tourists will often live a long time in hotels without discovering the nationality of the waiters. Englishmen will often live a long time in Italy without discovering the nationality of the Italians. But the test is simple. If you admire what Italians did without admiring Italians—you are a cheap tripper.

The same, of course, applies much nearer home. I have remarked elsewhere that country shopkeepers are justly offended by London people, who, coming

among them, continue to order all their goods from London. It is caddish to wink and squint at the colour of a man's wine, like a wine-taster; and then refuse to drink it. It is equally caddish to wink and squint at the colour of a man's orchard, like a landscape painter; and then refuse to buy the apples. It is always an insult to admire a thing and not use it. But the main point is that one has no right to see Stonehenge without Salisbury Plain and Salisbury. One has no right to respect the dead Italians without respecting the live ones. One has no right to visit a Christian society like a diver visiting the deep-sea fishes—fed along a lengthy tube by another atmosphere, and seeing the sights without breathing the air. It is very real bad manners.

XXI. On Seriousness

I DO not like seriousness. I think it is irreligious. Or, if you prefer the phrase, it is the fashion of all false religions. The man who takes everything seriously is the man who makes an idol of everything: he bows down to wood and stone until his limbs are as rooted as the roots of the tree or his head as fallen as the stone sunken by the roadside. It has often been discussed whether animals can laugh. The hyena is said to laugh: but it is rather in the sense in which the M.P. is said to utter "an ironical cheer." At the best, the hyena utters an ironical laugh. Broadly, it is true that all animals except Man are serious. And I think it is further demonstrated by the fact that all human beings who concern themselves in a concentrated way with animals are also serious: serious in a sense far beyond that of human beings concerned with anything else. Horses are serious; they have long, solemn faces. But horsey men are also serious—jockeys or trainers or grooms: they also have long, solemn faces. Dogs are serious: they have exactly that combination of moderate conscientiousness with monstrous conceit which is the make-up of most modern religions. But, however serious dogs may be, they can hardly be more serious than dog-fanciers—or dog-stealers. Dog-stealers, indeed, have to be particularly serious, because they have to come back and say they have found the dog. The faintest shade of irony, not to say levity, on their features, would evidently be fatal

to their plans. I will not carry the comparison through all the kingdoms of natural history: but it is true of all who fix their affection or intelligence on the lower animals. Cats are as serious as the Sphinx, who must have been some kind of cat, to judge by the attitude. But the rich old ladies who love cats are quite equally serious, about cats and about themselves. So also the ancient Egyptians worshipped cats, also crocodiles and beetles and all kinds of things; but they were all serious and made their worshippers serious. Egyptian art was intentionally harsh, clear, and conventional; but it could very vividly represent men driving, hunting, fighting, feasting, praying. Yet I think you will pass along many corridors of that coloured and almost cruel art before you see a man laughing. Their gods did not encourage them to laugh. I am told by housewives that beetles seldom laugh. Cats do not laugh—except the Cheshire Cat (which is not found in Egypt); and even he can only grin. And crocodiles do not laugh. They weep.

This comparison between the sacred animals of Egypt and the pet animals of to-day is not so far-fetched as it may seem to some people. There is a healthy and an unhealthy love of animals: and the nearest definition of the difference is that the unhealthy love of animals is serious. I am quite prepared to love a rhinoceros, with reasonable precautions: he is, doubtless, a delightful father to the young rhinoceros. But I will not promise not to laugh at a rhinoceros. I will not worship the beast with the little horn. I will not adore the Golden Calf; still less will I adore the Fatted Calf. On the contrary, I will eat him. There is some sort of joke about eating an animal, or even about an animal eating you. Let us hope we shall perceive it at the proper moment, if it ever occurs. But I will not

worship an animal. That is, I will not take an animal quite seriously : and I know why.

Wherever there is Animal Worship there is Human Sacrifice. That is, both symbolically and literally, a real truth of historical experience. Suppose a thousand black slaves were sacrificed to the black-beetle ; suppose a million maidens were flung into the Nile to feed the crocodile ; suppose the cat could eat men instead of mice—it could still be no more than that sacrifice of humanity that so often makes the horse more important than the groom, or the lap-dog more important even than the lap. The only right view of the animal is the comic view. Because the view is comic it is naturally affectionate. And because it is affectionate, it is never respectful.

I know no place where the true contrast has been more candidly, clearly, and (for all I know) unconsciously expressed than in an excellent little book of verse called " Bread and Circuses " by Helen Parry Eden, the daughter of Judge Parry, who has inherited both the humour and the humanity in spite of which her father succeeded as a modern magistrate. There are a great many other things that might be praised in the book, but I should select for praise the sane love of animals. There is, for instance, a little poem on a cat from the country who has come to live in a flat in Battersea (everybody at some time of their lives has lived or will live in a flat in Battersea, except, perhaps, the " prisoner of the Vatican "), and the verses have a tenderness, with a twist of the grotesque, which seems to me the exactly appropriate tone about domestic pets :

> And now you're here. Well, it may be
> The sun *does* rise in Battersea
> Although to-day be dark ;
> Life is not shorn of loves and hates
> While there are sparrows on the slates
> And keepers in the Park.

> And you yourself will come to learn
> The ways of London; and in turn
> Assume your Cockney cares
> Like other folk that live in flats,
> Chasing your purely abstract rats
> Upon the concrete stairs.

That is like Hood at his best; but it is, moreover, penetrated with a profound and true appreciation of the fundamental idea that all love of the cat must be founded on the *absurdity* of the cat, and only thus can a morbid idolatry be avoided. Perhaps those who appeared to be witches were those old ladies who took their cats too seriously. The cat in this book is called "Four-Paws," which is as jolly as a gargoyle. But the name of the cat must be something familiar and even jeering, if it be only Tom or Tabby or Topsy: something that shows man is not afraid of it. Otherwise the name of the cat will be Pasht.

But when the same poet comes accidentally across an example of the insane seriousness about animals that some modern "humanitarians" exhibit, she turns against the animal-lover as naturally and instinctively as she turns to the animal. A writer on a society paper had mentioned some rich woman who had appeared on Cup Day "gowned" in some way or other, and inserted the tearful parenthesis that "she has just lost a dear dog in London." The real animal-lover instantly recognizes the wrong note, and dances on the dog's grave with a derision as unsympathetic as Swift:

> Dear are my friends, and yet my heart still light is,
> Undimmed the eyes that see our set depart,
> Snatched from the Season by appendicitis
> Or something quite as smart.
>
> But when my Chin-Chin drew his latest breath
> On Marie's outspread apron, slow and wheezily,
> I simply sniffed, I could not take *his* death
> So Pekineasily. . . .

A Gleaming Cohort

. . . Grief courts these ovations,
And many press my sable-suèded hand,
Noting the blackest of Lucile's creations
Inquire, and understand.

It is that balance of instincts that is the essence of all satire: however fantastic satire may be, it must always be potentially rational and fundamentally moderate, for it must be ready to hit both to right and to left at opposite extravagances. And the two extravagances which exist on the edges of our harassed and secretive society to-day are cruelty to animals and worship of animals. They both come from taking animals too seriously: the cruel man must hate the animal; the crank must worship the animal, and perhaps fear it. Neither knows how to love it.

XXII. The Song of the Strange Ascetic

IF I had been a Heathen,
I'd have praised the purple vine,
My slaves should dig the vineyards,
And I would drink the wine.
But Higgins is a Heathen,
And his slaves grow lean and grey,
That he may drink some tepid milk
Exactly twice a day.

If I had been a Heathen,
I'd have crowned Neœra's curls,
And filled my life with love affairs,
My house with dancing girls;
But Higgins is a Heathen,
And to lecture rooms is forced,
Where his aunts, who are not married,
Demand to be divorced.

If I had been a Heathen,
I'd have sent my armies forth,
And dragged behind my chariots
The Chieftains of the North.
But Higgins is a Heathen,
And he drives the dreary quill,
To lend the poor that funny cash
That makes them poorer still.

If I had been a Heathen,
I'd have piled my pyre on high,
And in a great red whirlwind
Gone roaring to the sky;

A Gleaming Cohort

But Higgins is a Heathen,
 And a richer man than I;
And they put him in an oven,
 Just as if he were a pie.

Now who that runs can read it,
 The riddle that I write,
Of why this poor old sinner,
 Should sin without delight——?
But I, I cannot read it
 (Although I run and run),
Of them that do not have the faith,
 And will not have the fun.

XXIII. Dukes

THE Duc de Chambertin-Pommard was a small but lively relic of a really aristocratic family, the members of which were nearly all Atheists up to the time of the French Revolution, but since that event (beneficial in such various ways) had been very devout. He was a Royalist, a Nationalist, and a perfectly sincere patriot in that particular style which consists of ceaselessly asserting that one's country is not so much in danger as already destroyed. He wrote cheery little articles for the Royalist Press entitled "The End of France" or "The Last Cry," or what not, and he gave the final touches to a picture of the Kaiser riding across a pavement of prostrate Parisians with a glow of patriotic exultation. He was quite poor, and even his relations had no money. He walked briskly to all his meals at a little open café, and he looked just like everybody else.

Living in a country where aristocracy does not exist, he had a high opinion of it. He would yearn for the swords and the stately manners of the Pommards before the Revolution—most of whom had been (in theory) Republicans. But he turned with a more practical eagerness to the one country in Europe where the tricolour has never flown and men have never been roughly equalized before the State. The beacon and comfort of his life was England, which all Europe sees clearly as the one pure aristocracy that remains. He had, moreover, a mild taste for sport and kept an English bulldog, and he believed the

English to be a race of bulldogs, of heroic squires, and hearty yeomen vassals, because he read all this in English Conservative papers, written by exhausted little Levantine clerks. But his reading was naturally for the most part in the French Conservative papers (though he knew English well), and it was in these that he first heard of the horrible Budget. There he read of the confiscatory revolution planned by the Lord Chancellor of the Exchequer, the sinister Georges Lloyd. He also read how chivalrously Prince Arthur Balfour of Burleigh had defied that demagogue, assisted by Austen the Lord Chamberlain and the gay and witty Walter Lang. And being a brisk partisan and a capable journalist, he decided to pay England a special visit and report to his paper upon the struggle.

He drove for an eternity in an open fly through beautiful woods, with a letter of introduction in his pocket to one duke, who was to introduce him to another duke. The endless and numberless avenues of bewildering pine woods gave him a queer feeling that he was driving through the countless corridors of a dream. Yet the vast silence and freshness healed his irritation at modern ugliness and unrest. It seemed a background fit for the return of chivalry. In such a forest a king and all his court might lose themselves hunting or a knight errant might perish with no companion but God. The castle itself when he reached it was somewhat smaller than he had expected, but he was delighted with its romantic and castellated outline. He was just about to alight when somebody opened two enormous gates at the side and the vehicle drove briskly through.

"That is not the house?" he inquired politely of the driver.

"No, sir," said the driver, controlling the corners of his mouth. "The lodge, sir."

"Indeed," said the Duc de Chambertin-Pommard, "that is where the Duke's land begins?"

"Oh no, sir," said the man, quite in distress. "We've been in his Grace's land all day."

The Frenchman thanked him and leant back in the carriage, feeling as if everything were incredibly huge and vast, like Gulliver in the country of the Brobdingnags.

He got out in front of a long façade of a somewhat severe building, and a little careless man in a shooting jacket and knickerbockers ran down the steps. He had a weak, fair moustache and dull, blue, babyish eyes; his features were insignificant, but his manner extremely pleasant and hospitable. This was the Duke of Aylesbury, perhaps the largest landowner in Europe, and known only as a horsebreeder until he began to write abrupt little letters about the Budget. He led the French Duke upstairs, talking trivialities in a hearty way, and there presented him to another and more important English oligarch, who got up from a writing-desk with a slightly senile jerk. He had a gleaming bald head and glasses; the lower part of his face was masked with a short, dark beard, which did not conceal a beaming smile, not unmixed with sharpness. He stooped a little as he ran, like some sedentary head clerk or cashier; and even without the cheque-book and papers on his desk would have given the impression of a merchant or man of business. He was dressed in a light grey check jacket. He was the Duke of Windsor, the great Unionist statesman. Between these two loose, amiable men, the little Gaul stood erect in his black frock-coat, with the monstrous gravity of French ceremonial good manners. This stiffness led the Duke of Windsor to put him at his ease (like a tenant), and he said, rubbing his hands:

"I was delighted with your letter . . . delighted.

I shall be very pleased if I can give you—er—any details."

"My visit," said the Frenchman, "scarcely suffices for the scientific exhaustion of detail. I seek only the idea. The idea, that is always the immediate thing."

"Quite so," said the other rapidly; "quite so . . . the idea."

Feeling somehow that it was his turn (the English Duke having done all that could be required of him) Pommard had to say: "I mean the idea of aristocracy. I regard this as the last great battle for the idea. Aristocracy, like any other thing, must justify itself to mankind. Aristocracy is good because it preserves a picture of human dignity in a world where that dignity is often obscured by servile necessities. Aristocracy alone can keep a certain high reticence of soul and body, a certain noble distance between the sexes."

The Duke of Aylesbury, who had a clouded recollection of having squirted soda-water down the neck of a Countess on the previous evening, looked somewhat gloomy, as if lamenting the theoretic spirit of the Latin race. The elder Duke laughed heartily and said: "Well, well, you know; we English are horribly practical. With us the great question is the land. Out here in the country . . . do you know this part?"

"Yes, yes," cried the Frenchman eagerly. "I see what you mean. The country! the old rustic life of humanity! A holy war upon the bloated and filthy towns. What right have these anarchists to attack your busy and prosperous countrysides? Have they not thriven under your management? Are not the English villages always growing larger and gayer under the enthusiastic leadership of their encouraging squires? Have you not the Maypole? Have you not Merry England?"

The Duke of Aylesbury made a noise in his throat, and then said very distinctly: "They all go to London."

"All go to London?" repeated Pommard, with a blank stare. "Why?"

This time nobody answered, and Pommard had to attack again.

"The spirit of aristocracy is essentially opposed to the greed of the industrial cities. Yet in France there are actually one or two nobles so vile as to drive coal and gas trades, and drive them hard."

The Duke of Windsor looked at the carpet.

The Duke of Aylesbury went and looked out of the window. At length the latter said: "That's rather stiff, you know. One has to look after one's own business in town as well."

"Do not say it," cried the little Frenchman, starting up. "I tell you all Europe is one fight between business and honour. If we do not fight for honour, who will? What other right have we poor two-legged sinners to titles and quartered shields except that we staggeringly support some idea of giving things which cannot be demanded and avoiding things which cannot be punished? Our only claim is to be a wall across Christendom against the Jew pedlars and pawnbrokers, against the Goldsteins and the——"

The Duke of Aylesbury swung round with his hands in his pockets.

"Oh, I say," he said, "you've been readin' Lloyd George. Nobody but dirty Radicals can say a word against Goldstein."

"I certainly cannot permit," said the elder Duke, rising rather shakily, "the respected name of Lord Goldstein——"

He intended to be impressive, but there was something in the Frenchman's eye that is not so easily

impressed; there shone there that steel which is the mind of France.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I think I have all the details now. You have ruled England for four hundred years. By your own account you have not made the countryside endurable to men. By your own account you have helped the victory of vulgarity and smoke. And by your own account you are hand and glove with those very money-grubbers and adventurers whom gentlemen have no other business but to keep at bay. I do not know what your people will do; but my people would kill you."

Some seconds afterwards he had left the Duke's house, and some hours afterwards the Duke's estate.

XXIV. The Glory of Grey

I SUPPOSE that, taking this summer as a whole, people will not call it an appropriate time for praising the English climate. But for my part I will praise the English climate till I die—even if I die of the English climate. There is no weather so good as English weather. Nay, in a real sense there is no weather at all anywhere but in England. In France you have much sun and some rain; in Italy you have hot winds and cold winds; in Scotland and Ireland you have rain, either thick or thin; in America you have hells of heat and cold, and in the Tropics you have sunstrokes varied by thunderbolts. But all these you have on a broad and brutal scale, and you settle down into contentment or despair. Only in our own romantic country do you have the strictly romantic thing called Weather—beautiful and changing as a woman. The great English landscape painters (neglected now like everything that is English) have this salient distinction: that the Weather is not the atmosphere of their pictures; it is the subject of their pictures. They paint portraits of the Weather. The Weather sat to Constable. The Weather posed for Turner; and a deuce of a pose it was. This cannot truly be said of the greatest of their continental models or rivals. Poussin and Claude painted objects, ancient cities or perfect Arcadian shepherds through a clear medium of the climate. But in the English painters Weather is the hero; with Turner an Adelphi hero, taunting, flashing and fighting, melodramatic but really

magnificent. The English climate, a tall and terrible protagonist, robed in rain and thunder and snow and sunlight, fills the whole canvas and the whole foreground. I admit the superiority of many other French things besides French art. But I will not yield an inch on the superiority of English weather and weather-painting. Why, the French have not even got a word for weather: and you must ask for the weather in French as if you were asking for the time in English.

Then, again, variety of climate should always go with stability of abode. The weather in the desert is monotonous; and as a natural consequence the Arabs wander about, hoping it may be different somewhere. But an Englishman's house is not only his castle; it is his fairy castle. Clouds and colours of every varied dawn and eve are perpetually touching and turning it from clay to gold, or from gold to ivory. There is a line of woodland beyond a corner of my garden which is literally different on every one of the three hundred and sixty-five days. Sometimes it seems as near as a hedge, and sometimes as far as a faint and fiery evening cloud. The same principle (by the way) applies to the difficult problem of wives. Variability is one of the virtues of a woman. It avoids the crude requirement of polygamy. So long as you have one good wife you are sure to have a spiritual harem.

Now, among the heresies that are spoken in this matter is the habit of calling a grey day a "colourless" day. Grey is a colour, and can be a very powerful and pleasing colour. There is also an insulting style of speech about "one grey day just like another." You might as well talk about one green tree just like another. A grey clouded sky is indeed a canopy between us and the sun; so is a green tree, if it comes to that. But the grey umbrellas differ as much as

the green in their style and shape, in their tint and tilt. One day may be grey like steel, and another grey like dove's plumage. One may seem grey like the deathly frost, and another grey like the smoke of substantial kitchens. No things could seem farther apart than the doubt of grey and the decision of scarlet. Yet grey and red can mingle, as they do in the morning clouds: and also in a sort of warm smoky stone of which they build the little towns in the west country. In those towns even the houses that are wholly grey have a glow in them; as if their secret firesides were such furnaces of hospitality as faintly to transfuse the walls like walls of cloud. And wandering in those westland parts I did once really find a signpost pointing up a steep crooked path to a town that was called Clouds. I did not climb up to it; I feared that either the town would not be good enough for the name, or I should not be good enough for the town. Anyhow, the little hamlets of the warm grey stone have a geniality which is not achieved by all the artistic scarlet of the suburbs; as if it were better to warm one's hands at the ashes of Glastonbury than at the painted flames of Croydon.

Again, the enemies of grey (those astute, daring and evil-minded men) are fond of bringing forward the argument that colours suffer in grey weather, and that strong sunlight is necessary to all the hues of heaven and earth. Here again there are two words to be said; and it is essential to distinguish. It is true that sun is needed to burnish and bring into bloom the tertiary and dubious colours; the colour of peat, pea-soup, Impressionist sketches, brown velvet coats, olives, grey and blue slates, the complexions of vegetarians, the tints of volcanic rock, chocolate, cocoa, mud, soot, slime, old boots; the delicate shades of these do need the sunlight to bring

out the faint beauty that often clings to them. But if you have a healthy negro taste in colour, if you choke your garden with poppies and geraniums, if you paint your house sky-blue and scarlet, if you wear, let us say, a golden top-hat and a crimson frock-coat, you will not only be visible on the greyest day, but you will notice that your costume and environment produce a certain singular effect. You will find, I mean, that rich colours actually look more luminous on a grey day, because they are seen against a sombre background and seem to be burning with a lustre of their own. Against a dark sky all flowers look like fireworks. There is something strange about them, at once vivid and secret, like flowers traced in fire in the phantasmal garden of a witch. A bright blue sky is necessarily the high light of the picture; and its brightness kills all the bright blue flowers. But on a grey day the larkspur looks like fallen heaven; the red daisies are really the red lost eyes of day; and the sunflower is the vice-regent of the sun.

Lastly, there is this value about the colour that men call colourless; that it suggests in some way the mixed and troubled average of existence, especially in its quality of strife and expectation and promise. Grey is a colour that always seems on the eve of changing to some other colour; of brightening into blue or blanching into white or bursting into green and gold. So we may be perpetually reminded of the indefinite hope that is in doubt itself; and when there is grey weather in our hills or grey hairs in our head, perhaps they may still remind us of the morning.

XXV. The Miser and His Friends

IT is a sign of sharp sickness in a society when it is actually led by some special sort of lunatic. A mild touch of madness may even keep a man sane; for it may keep him modest. So some exaggerations in the State may remind it of its own normal. But it is bad when the head is cracked; when the roof of the commonwealth has a tile loose.

The two or three cases of this that occur in history have always been gibbeted gigantically. Thus Nero has become a black proverb, not merely because he was an oppressor, but because he was also an æsthete —that is, an erotomaniac. He not only tortured other people's bodies; he tortured his own soul into the same red revolting shapes. Though he came quite early in Roman Imperial history and was followed by many austere and noble emperors, yet for us the Roman Empire was never quite cleansed of that memory of the sexual madman. The populace or barbarians from whom we come could not forget the hour when they came to the highest place of the earth, saw the huge pedestal of the earthly omnipotence, read on it Divus Cæsar, and looked up and saw a statue without a head.

It is the same with that ugly entanglement before the Renaissance, from which, alas, most memories of the Middle Ages are derived. Louis XI was a very patient and practical man of the world; but (like many good business men) he was mad. The morbidity of the intriguer and the torturer clung about everything he did, even when it was right. And just

as the great Empire of Antoninus and Aurelius never wiped out Nero, so even the silver splendour of the latter saints, such as Vincent de Paul, has never painted out for the British public the crooked shadow of Louis XI. Whenever the unhealthy man has been on top, he has left a horrible savour that humanity finds still in its nostrils. Now in our time the unhealthy man is on top; but he is not the man mad on sex, like Nero; or mad on statecraft, like Louis XI; he is simply the man mad on money. Our tyrant is not the satyr or the torturer; but the miser.

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The modern miser has changed much from the miser of legend and anecdote; but only because he has grown yet more insane. The old miser had some touch of the human artist about him in so far that he collected gold—a substance that can really be admired for itself, like ivory or old oak. An old man who picked up yellow pieces had something of the simple ardour, something of the mystical materialism of a child who picks out yellow flowers. Gold is but one kind of coloured clay, but coloured clay can be very beautiful. The modern idolator of riches is content with far less genuine things. The glitter of guineas is like the glitter of buttercups, the chink of pelf is like the chime of bells, compared with the dreary papers and dead calculations which make the hobby of the modern miser.

The modern millionaire loves nothing so lovable as a coin. He is content sometimes with the dead crackle of notes; but far more often with the mere repetition of noughts in a ledger, all as like each other as eggs to eggs. And as for comfort, the old miser could be comfortable, as many tramps and savages are, when he was once used to being unclean.

The Miser and His Friends

A man could find some comfort in an unswept attic or an unwashed shirt. But the Yankee millionaire can find no comfort with five telephones at his bed-head and ten minutes for his lunch. The round coins in the miser's stocking were safe in some sense. The round noughts in the millionaire's ledger are safe in no sense; the same fluctuation which excites him with their increase depresses him with their diminution. The miser at least collects coins; his hobby is numismatics. The man who collects noughts collects nothings.

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It may be admitted that the man amassing millions is a bit of an idiot; but it may be asked in what sense does he rule the modern world. The answer to this is very important and rather curious. The evil enigma for us here is not the rich, but the Very Rich. The distinction is important; because this special problem is separate from the old general quarrel about rich and poor that runs through the Bible and all strong books, old and new. The special problem to-day is that certain powers and privileges have grown so world-wide and unwieldy that they are out of the power of the moderately rich as well as of the moderately poor. They are out of the power of everybody except a few millionaires—that is, misers. In the old normal friction of normal wealth and poverty I am myself on the Radical side. I think that a Berkshire squire has too much power over his tenants; that a Brompton builder has too much power over his workmen; that a West London doctor has too much power over the poor patients in the West London Hospital.

But a Berkshire squire has no power over cosmopolitan finance, for instance. A Brompton builder has not money enough to run a Newspaper Trust. A

West End doctor could not make a corner in quinine and freeze everybody out. The merely rich are not rich enough to rule the modern market. The things that change modern history, the big national and international loans, the big educational and philanthropic foundations, the purchase of numberless newspapers, the big prices paid for peerages, the big expenses often incurred in elections—these are getting too big for everybody except the misers: the men with the largest of earthly fortunes and the smallest of earthly aims.

There are two other odd and rather important things to be said about them. The first is this: that with this aristocracy we do not have the chance of a lucky variety in types which belongs to larger and looser aristocracies. The moderately rich include all kinds of people—even good people. Even priests are sometimes saints; and even soldiers are sometimes heroes. Some doctors have really grown wealthy by curing their patients and not by flattering them; some brewers have been known to sell beer. But among the Very Rich you will never find a really generous man, even by accident. They may give their money away, but they will never give themselves away; they are egoistic, secretive, dry as old bones. To be smart enough to get all that money you must be dull enough to want it.

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Lastly, the most serious point about them is this: that the new miser is flattered for his meanness and the old one never was. It was never called self-denial in the old miser that he lived on bones. It is called self-denial in the new millionaire if he lives on beans. A man like Dancer was never praised as a Christian saint for going in rags. A man like Rockefeller is praised as a sort of pagan stoic for his early

rising or his unassuming dress. His "simple" meals, his "simple" clothes, his "simple" funeral, are all extolled as if they were creditable to him. They are disgraceful to him: exactly as disgraceful as the tatters and vermin of the old miser were disgraceful to *him*. To be in rags for charity would be the condition of a saint; to be in rags for money was that of a filthy old fool. Precisely in the same way, to be "simple" for charity is the state of a saint; to be "simple" for money is that of a filthy old fool. Of the two I have more respect for the old miser, gnawing bones in an attic: if he was not nearer to God, he was at least a little nearer to men. His simple life was a little more like the life of the real poor.

XXVI. Pageants and Dress

THE only objection to the excellent series of Pageants that has adorned England of late is that they are made too expensive. The mass of the common people cannot afford to see the Pageant; so they are obliged to put up with the inferior function of acting in it. I myself got in with the rabble in this way. It was to the Church Pageant; and I was much impressed with certain illuminations which such an experience makes possible. A Pageant exhibits all the fun of a Fancy Dress Ball, with this great difference: that its motive is reverent instead of irreverent. In the one case a man dresses up as his great-grandfather in order to make game of his great-grandfather; in the other case, in order to do him honour. What the great-grandfather himself would think of either of them we fortunately have not to conjecture. The alteration is important and satisfactory. All natural men regard their ancestors as dignified because they are dead; it was a great pity and folly that we had fallen into the habit of regarding the Middle Ages as a mere second-hand shop for comic costumes. Mediæval costume and heraldry had been meant as the very manifestation of courage and publicity and a decent pride. Colours were worn that they might be conspicuous across a battle-field; an animal was rampant on a helmet that he might stand up evident against the sky. The mediæval time has been talked of too much as if it were full of twilight and secrecies. It was a time of avowal and of what many modern people call vulgarity. A man's dress was that of his

family or his trade or his religion; and these are exactly the three things which we now think it bad taste to discuss. Imagine a modern man being dressed in green and orange because he was a Robinson. Or imagine him dressed in blue and gold because he was an auctioneer. Or imagine him dressed in purple and silver because he was an agnostic. He is now dressed only in the ridiculous disguise of a gentleman; which tells one nothing at all, not even whether he is one. If ever he dresses up as a cavalier or a monk it is only as a joke—very often as a disreputable and craven joke, a joke in a mask. That vivid and heraldic costume which was meant to show everybody who a man was is now chiefly worn by people at Covent Garden masquerades who wish to conceal who they are. The clerk dresses up as a monk in order to be absurd. If the monk dressed up as a clerk in order to be absurd I could understand it; though the escapade might disturb his monastic superiors. A man in a sensible gown and hood might possibly put on a top-hat and a pair of trousers in order to cover himself with derision, in some extravagance of mystical humility. But that a man who calmly shows himself to the startled sky every morning in a top-hat and trousers should think it comic to put on a simple and dignified robe and hood is a situation which almost splits the brain. Things like the Church Pageant may do something towards snubbing this silly and derisive view of the past. Hitherto the young stockbroker, when he wanted to make a fool of himself, dressed up as Cardinal Wolsey. It may now begin to dawn on him that he ought rather to make a wise man of himself before attempting the impersonation.

Nevertheless, the truth which the Pageant has to tell the British public is rather more special and curious than one might at first assume. It is easy

enough to say in the rough that modern dress is dingy, and that the dress of our fathers was more bright and picturesque. But that is not really the point. At Fulham Palace one can compare the huge crowd of people acting in the Pageant with the huge crowd of people looking at it. There is a startling difference, but it is not a mere difference between gaiety and gloom. There is many a respectable young woman in the audience who has on her own hat more colours than the whole Pageant put together. There are belts of brown and black in the Pageant itself: the Puritans round the scaffold of Laud, or the black-robed doctors of the eighteenth century. There are patches of purple and yellow in the audience: the more select young ladies and the less select young gentlemen. It is not that our age has no appetite for the gay or the gaudy—it is a very hedonistic age. It is not that past ages—even the rich symbolic Middle Ages—did not feel any sense of safety in what is sombre or restrained. A friar in a brown coat is much more severe than an 'Arry in a brown bowler. Why is it that he is also much more pleasant?

I think the whole difference is in this: that the first man is brown with a reason and the second without a reason. If a hundred monks wore one brown habit it was because they felt that their toil and brotherhood were well expressed in being clad in the coarse, dark colour of the earth. I do not say that they said so, or even clearly thought so; but their artistic instinct went straight when they chose the mud-colour for laborious brethren or the flame-colour for the first princes of the Church. But when 'Arry puts on a brown bowler he does not either with his consciousness or his subconsciousness (that rich soil) feel that he is crowning his brows with the brown earth, clasping round his temples a strange crown of clay. He does not wear a dust-coloured hat as a

form of strewing dust upon his head. He wears a dust-coloured hat because the nobility and gentry who are his models discourage him from wearing a crimson hat or a golden hat or a peacock-green hat. He is not thinking of the brownness of brown. It is not to him a symbol of the roots, of realism, or of autochthonous humility; on the contrary, he thinks it looks rather "classy."

The modern trouble is not that the people do not see splendid colours or striking effects. The trouble is that they see too much of them and see them divorced from all reason. It is a misfortune of modern language that the word "insignificant" is vaguely associated with the words "small" or "slight." But a thing is insignificant when we do not know what it signifies. An African elephant lying dead in Ludgate Circus would be insignificant. That is, one could not recognize it as the sign or message of anything. One could not regard it as an allegory or a love-token. One could not even call it a hint. In the same way the solar system is insignificant. Unless you have some special religious theory of what it means, it is merely big and silly, like the elephant in Ludgate Circus. And similarly, modern life, with its vastness, its energy, its elaboration, its wealth, is, in the exact sense, insignificant. Nobody knows what we mean; we do not know ourselves. Nobody could explain intelligently why a coat is black, why a waistcoat is white, why asparagus is eaten with the fingers, or why Hammersmith omnibuses are painted red. The mediævals had a much stronger idea of crowding all possible significance into things. If they had consented to waste red paint on a large and ugly Hammersmith omnibus it would have been in order to suggest that there was some sort of gory magnanimity about Hammersmith. A heraldic lion is no more like a real lion than a chimney-

pot hat is like a chimney-pot. But the lion was meant to be a lion. And the chimney-pot hat was not meant to be like a chimney-pot or like anything else. The resemblance only struck certain philosophers (probably gutter-boys) afterwards. The top-hat was not intended as a high uncastellated tower; it was not intended at all. This is the real baseness of modernity. This is, for example, the only real vulgarity of advertisements. It is not that the colours on the posters are bad. It is that they are much too good for the meaningless work which they serve. When at last people see—as at the Pageant—crosses and dragons, leopards and lilies, there is scarcely one of the things that they now see as a symbol which they have not already seen as a trade-mark. If the great "Assumption of the Virgin" were painted in front of them they might remember Blank's Blue. If the Emperor of China were buried before them, the yellow robes might remind them of Dash's Mustard. We have not the task of preaching colour and gaiety to a people that has never had it, to Puritans who have neither seen nor appreciated it. We have a harder task. We have to teach those to appreciate it who have always seen it.

XXVII. On Stage Costume

WHILE watching the other evening a very well-managed reproduction of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," I had the sudden conviction that the play would be much better if it were acted in modern costume, or, at any rate, in English costume. We all remember hearing in our boyhood about the absurd conventionality of Garrick and Mrs. Siddons, when he acted Macbeth in a tie-wig and a tail-coat, and she acted Lady Macbeth in a crinoline as big and stiff as a cartwheel. This has always been talked of as a piece of comic ignorance or impudent modernity; as if Rosalind appeared in rational dress with a bicycle; as if Portia appeared with a horse-hair wig and side-whiskers. But I am not so sure that the great men and women who founded the English stage in the eighteenth century were quite such fools as they looked; especially as they looked to the romantic historians and eager archæologists of the nineteenth century. I have a queer suspicion that Garrick and Siddons knew nearly as much about dressing as they did about acting.

One distinction can at least be called obvious. Garrick did not care much for the historical costume of Macbeth; but he cared as much as Shakespeare did. He did not know much about that prehistoric and partly mythical Celtic chief; but he knew more than Shakespeare; and he could not conceivably have cared less. Now the Victorian age was honestly interested in the dark and epic origins of Europe; was honestly interested in Picts and Scots, in Celts

and Saxons; in the blind drift of the races and the blind drive of the religions. Ossian and the Arthurian revival had interested people in distant dark-headed men who probably never existed. Freeman, Carlyle, and the other Teutonists had interested them in distant fair-headed men who almost certainly never existed. Pusey and Pugin and the first High Churchmen had interested them in shaven-headed men, dark or fair, men who did undoubtedly exist, but whose real merits and defects would have startled their modern admirers very considerably. Under these circumstances it is not strange that our age should have felt a curiosity about the solid but mysterious Macbeth of the Dark Ages. But all this does not alter the ultimate fact: that the only Macbeth that mankind will ever care about is the Macbeth of Shakespeare, and not the Macbeth of history. When England was romantic, it was interested in Macbeth's kilt and claymore. In the same way, if England becomes a Republic, it will be specially interested in the Republicans in "Julius Cæsar." If England becomes Roman Catholic, it will be specially interested in the theory of chastity in "Measure for Measure." But being interested in these things will never be the same as being interested in Shakespeare. And for a man interested in Shakespeare, a man merely concerned about what Shakespeare meant, a Macbeth in powdered hair and knee-breeches is perfectly satisfactory. For Macbeth, as Shakespeare shows him, is much more like a man in knee-breeches than a man in a kilt. His subtle hesitations and his suicidal impenitence belong to the bottomless speculations of a highly civilized society. The "Out, out, brief candle" is far more appropriate to the last wax taper after a ball of powder and patches than to the smoky but sustained fires in iron baskets which probably flared and smouldered over the swift crimes

of the eleventh century. The real Macbeth probably killed Duncan with the nearest weapon, and then confessed it to the nearest priest. Certainly, he may never have had any such doubts about the normal satisfaction of being alive. However regrettably negligent of the importance of Duncan's life, he had, I fancy, few philosophical troubles about the importance of his own. The men of the Dark Ages were all optimists, as all children and all animals are. The madness of Shakespeare's Macbeth goes along with candles and silk stockings. That madness only appears in the age of reason.

So far, then, from Garrick's anachronism being despised, I should like to see it imitated. Shakespeare got the tale of Theseus from Athens, as he got the tale of Macbeth from Scotland; and having reluctantly seen the names of those two countries in the record, I am convinced that he never gave them another thought. Macbeth is not a Scotchman; he is a man. But Theseus is not only not an Athenian; he is actually and unmistakably an Englishman. He is the Super-Squire; the best version of the English country gentleman; better than Wardle in "Pickwick." The Duke of Athens is a duke (that is, a dook), but not of Athens. That free city is thousands of miles away.

If Theseus came on the stage in gaiters or a shooting-jacket, if Bottom the Weaver wore a smock-frock, if Hermia and Helena were dressed as two modern English schoolgirls, we should not be departing from Shakespeare, but rather returning to him. The cold, classical draperies (of which he probably never dreamed, but with which we drape Ægisthus or Hippolyta) are not only a nuisance, but a falsehood. They misrepresent the whole meaning of the play. For the meaning of the play is that the little things of life as well as the great things stray on the border-

land of the unknown. That as a man may fall among devils for a morbid crime, or fall among angels for a small piece of piety or pity, so also he may fall among fairies through an amiable flirtation or a fanciful jealousy. The fact that a back door opens into elfland is all the more reason for keeping the foreground familiar, and even prosaic. For even the fairies are very neighbourly and firelight fairies; therefore the human beings ought to be very human in order to effect the fantastic contrast. And in Shakespeare they are very human. Hermia the vixen and Helena the maypole are obviously only two excitable and quite modern girls. Hippolyta has never been an Amazon; she may perhaps have once been a Suffragette. Theseus is a gentleman, a thing entirely different from a Greek oligarch. That golden good-nature which employs culture itself to excuse the clumsiness of the uncultured is a thing quite peculiar to those lazier Christian countries where the Christian gentleman has been evolved:

> For nothing in this world can be amiss
> When simpleness and duty tender it.

Or, again, in that noble scrap of sceptical magnanimity which was unaccountably cut out in the last performance:

> The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse if imagination amend them.

These are obviously the easy and reconciling comments of some kindly but cultivated squire, who will not pretend to his guests that the play is good, but who will not let the actors see that he thinks it bad. But this is certainly not the way in which an Athenian Tory like Aristophanes would have talked about a bad play.

But as the play is dressed and acted at present, the whole idea is inverted. We do not seem to creep out of a human house into a natural wood and there find the superhuman and supernatural. The mortals, in their tunics and togas, seem more distant from us than the fairies in their hoods and peaked caps. It is an anticlimax to meet the English elves when we have already encountered the Greek gods. The same mistake, oddly enough, was made in the only modern play worth mentioning in the same street with " A Midsummer Night's Dream," " Peter Pan." Sir James Barrie ought to have left out the fairy dog who puts the children to bed. If children had such dogs as that they would never wish to go to fairyland.

This fault or falsity in " Peter Pan " is, of course, repeated in the strange and ungainly incident of the father being chained up in the dog's kennel. Here, indeed, it is much worse: for the manlike dog was pretty and touching: the doglike man was ignominious and repulsive. But the fallacy is the same; it is the fallacy that weakens the otherwise triumphant poetry and wit of Sir James Barrie's play; and weakens all our treatment of fairy plays at present. Fairyland is a place of positive realities, plain laws, and a decisive story. The actors of " A Midsummer Night's Dream " seemed to think that the play was meant to be chaotic. The clowns thought they must be always clowning. But in reality it is the solemnity —nay, the conscientiousness—of the yokels that is akin to the mystery of the landscape and the tale.

XXVIII. On Monsters

I ONCE saw in the newspapers this paragraph, of which I made a note :

"LEPRECHAUN" CAUGHT

Great excitement has been caused in Mullingar, in the west of Ireland, by the report that the supposed "Leprechaun," which several children stated they had seen at Killough, near Delvin, during the past two months, was captured. Two policemen found a creature of dwarfish proportions in a wood near the town, and brought the little man to Mullingar Workhouse, where he is now an inmate. He eats greedily, but all attempts to interview him have failed, his only reply being a peculiar sound between a growl and a squeal. The inmates regard him with interest mixed with awe.

This seems like the beginning of an important era of research ; it seems as if the world of experiments had at last touched the world of reality. It is as if one read : "Great excitement has been caused in Rotten Row, in the west of London, by the fact that the centaur, previously seen by several colonels and young ladies, has at last been stopped in his lawless gallop." Or it is as if one saw in a newspaper : "Slight perturbation has been caused at the west end of Margate by the capture of a mermaid," or "A daring fowler, climbing the crags of the Black Mountains for a nest of eagles, found, somewhat unex-

pectedly, that it was a nest of angels." It is wonderful to have the calm admission in cold print of such links between the human world and other worlds. It is interesting to know that they took the Leprechaun to a workhouse. It settles, and settles with a very sound instinct, the claim of humanity in such sublime curiosities. If a centaur were really found in Rotten Row, would they take him to a workhouse or to a stable? If a mermaid were really fished up at Margate, would they take her to a workhouse or to an aquarium? If people caught an angel unawares, would they put the angel in a workhouse? Or in an aviary?

The idea of the Missing Link was not at all new with Darwin; it was not invented merely by those vague but imaginative minor poets to whom we owe most of our ideas about evolution. Men had always played about with the idea of a possible link between human and bestial life, and the very existence—or, if you will, the very non-existence—of the centaur or the mermaid proves it. All the mythologies had dreamed of a half-human monster. The only objection to the centaur and the mermaid was that they could not be found. In every other respect their merits were of the most solid sort. So it is with the Darwinian ideal of a link between man and the brutes. There is no objection to it except that there is no evidence for it. The only objection to the Missing Link is that he is apparently fabulous, like the centaur and the mermaid, and all the other images under which man has imagined a bridge between himself and brutality. In short, the only objection to the Missing Link is that he is missing.

But there is also another very elementary difference. The Greeks and the Mediævals invented monstrosities. But they treated them as monstrosities—that is,

they treated them as exceptions. They did not deduce any law from such lawless things as the centaur or the merman, the griffin or the hippogriff. But modern people did try to make a law out of the Missing Link. They made him a lawgiver, though they were hunting for him like a criminal. They built on the foundation of him before he was found. They made this unknown monster, the mixture of the man and ape, the founder of society and the accepted father of mankind. The ancients had a fancy that there was a mongrel of horse and man, a mongrel of fish and man. But they did not make it the father of anything; they did not ask the mad mongrel to breed. The ancients did not draw up a system of ethics based upon the centaur, showing how man in a civilized society must take care of his hands, but must not wholly forget his hoovcs. They never reminded woman that, although she had the golden hair of a goddess, she had the tail of a fish. But the moderns did talk to man as if he were the Missing Link; they did remind him that he must allow for apish imbecility and bestial tricks. The moderns did tell the woman that she was half a brute, for all her beauty; you can find the thing said again and again in Schopenhauer and other prophets of the modern spirit. That is the real difference between the two monsters. The Missing Link is still missing and so is the merman. On the top of all this we have the Leprechaun, apparently an actual monster at present in the charge of the police. It is unnecessary to say that numbers of learned people have proved again and again that it could not exist. It is equally unnecessary to say that numbers of unlearned people—children, mothers of children, workers, common people who grow corn or catch fish —had seen them existing. Almost every other simple type of our working population had seen a Leprechaun. A fisherman had seen a Leprechaun. A

farmer had seen a Leprechaun. Even a postman had probably seen one. But there was one simple son of the people whose path had never before been crossed by the prodigy. Never until then had a policeman seen a Leprechaun. It was only a question of whether the monster should take the policeman away with him into Elfland (where such a policeman as he would certainly have been fettered by the fatal love of the fairy queen), or whether the policeman should take away the monster to the police-station. The forces of this earth prevailed; the constable captured the elf, instead of the elf capturing the constable. The officer took him to the workhouse, and opened a new epoch in the study of tradition and folk-lore.

What will the modern world do if it finds (as very likely it will) that the wildest fables have had a basis in fact; that there are creatures of the border-land, that there are oddities on the fringe of fixed laws, that there are things so unnatural as easily to be called preternatural? I do not know what the modern world will do about these things; I only know what I hope. I hope the modern world will be as sane *about these things as the mediæval world was about* them. Because I believe that an ogre can have two heads, that is no reason why I should lose the only head that I have. Because the mediæval man thought that some man had the head of a dog, that was no reason why he himself should have the head of a donkey. The mediæval man was never essentially weak or stupid about any of his beliefs, however unfounded they were. He did not lack judgment; he only lacked the opportunities of judgment. He had superstitions; but he was not superstitious about them. He was wrong about Africa; but then, to do him justice, he did not care whether he was right. He had got that particular thing which some modern people call "the love of truth," but which is really

simply the power of taking one's own mistakes seriously. He thought that ordinary men were a serious matter; as they are. He thought that extraordinary men were a fantastic fairy-tale; and he thought (very rightly) that the fairy-tale was all the more fantastic if it was true. He did not let dog-faced men affect his conception of mankind; he regarded them as a joke, the best as a practical joke. But in our time, I am sorry to say, we have seen some signs of the possibility that such aberrations or monstrosities as spiritual science may discover will be taken as real tests of, or keys to, the human lot. For instance, the psychological phenomenon called "dual personality" is certainly a thing so extraordinary that any old-fashioned rationalist or agnostic would simply have called it a miracle and disbelieved it. But nowadays those who do believe it will not treat it as a miracle—that is, as an exception. They try to make deductions from it, theories about identity and metempsychosis and psychical evolution, and God knows what. If it is true that one particular body has two souls, it is a joke, as if it had two noses. It must not be permitted to upset the actualities of our human happiness. If some one says, "Jones blew his nose," and Jones is of so peculiar a formation that one may with logical propriety ask, "Which nose?" that is no reason why the ordinary formula should lose its ordinary human utility. This is, I think, one of the most real dangers that lie in front of the civilization that has just discovered the Leprechaun. We are going to find all the gods and fairies all over again, all the spiritual hybrids and all the jests of eternity. But we are not going to find them, as the pagans found them, in our youth, in an atmosphere in which gods can be jested with or giants slapped on the back. We are going to find them, in the old age of our society, in a mood dangerously

morbid, in a spirit only too ready to take the exception instead of the rule. If we find creatures that are half human, we may only too possibly make them an excuse for being half human ourselves. I should not be very painfully concerned about the Leprechaun if people had thrown stones at him as a bad fairy, or given him milk and fire as a good one. But there is something menacing about taking away a monster in order to study him. There is something sinister about putting a Leprechaun in the workhouse. The only solid comfort is that he certainly will not work.

XXIX. The Evolution of Emma

AMONG the many good critical tributes to the genius of Jane Austen, to the fine distinction of her humour, the sympathetic intimacy of her satire, the easy exactitude of her unpretentious style, which have appeared in celebration of her centenary, there is one criticism that is naturally recurrent: the remark that she was quite untouched by the towering politics of her time. This is intrinsically true; nevertheless it may easily be used to imply the reverse of the truth. It is true that Jane Austen did not attempt to teach any history or politics; but it is not true that we cannot learn any history or politics from Jane Austen. Any work so piercingly intelligent of its own kind, and especially any work of so wise and humane a kind, is sure to tell us much more than shallower studies covering a larger surface. I will not say much of the mere formality of some of the conventions and conversational forms; for in such things it is not only not certain that change is important, but it is not even certain that it is final. The view that a thing is old-fashioned is itself a fashion; and may soon be an old fashion. We have seen this in many recurrences of female dress; but it has a deeper basis in human nature. The truth is that a phrase can be falsified by use without being false in fact; it can seem stale without being really stilted. Those who see a word as merely worn out, fail to look forward as well as back. I know of two poems by two Irish poets of two different centuries, essentially on the same theme; the lover declaring that his love will outlast the mere

popularity of the beauty. One is by Mr. Yeats and begins: "Though you are in your shining days." The other is by Tom Moore and begins: "Believe me, if all those endearing young charms." The latter language strikes us as ridiculously florid and over-ripe; but Moore was far from being ridiculous. Believe me (as he would say), it was no poetaster who wrote those hackneyed words about the silent harp and the heart that breaks for liberty. And if English were read some day by strangers as a classic language, I am not sure that "endearing" would not endure as a better word than "shining"; or even that (after some repetition and reaction) it might not seem as strained to say "shining" as to say "shiny." Yet Mr. Yeats also is a great poet, as I called him last week; only the printer or somebody altered it to a "good" one—a mysteriously moderate emendation. Similarly, when one of Jane Austen's heroines wants to say that the hero is a good fellow, she expresses confidence in what she calls "his worth." This goads her younger modern readers to madness; yet in truth the term is far more philosophic and eternal than the terms they would use themselves. They would probably say he was "nice," and Jane Austen would indeed be avenged. For the best of her heroes, Henry Tilney, himself foresaw and fulminated against the unmeaning ubiquity of that word, a prophet of the pure reason of his age, seeing in a vision of the future the fall of the human mind.

Negatively, of course, the historic lesson from Jane Austen is enormous. She is perhaps most typical of her time in being supremely irreligious. Her very virtues glitter with the cold sunlight of the great secular epoch between mediæval and modern mysticism. In that small masterpiece, "Northanger Abbey," her unconsciousness of history is itself a piece of history. For Catherine Morland was right,

as young and romantic people often are. A real crime *had* been committed in Northanger Abbey. It is implied in the very name of Northanger Abbey It was the crucial crime of the sixteenth century, when all the institutions of the poor were savagely seized to be the private possessions of the rich. It is strange that the name remains; it is stranger still that it remains unrealized. We should think it odd to go to tea at a man's house and find it was still called a church. We should be surprised if a gentleman's shooting box at Claybury were referred to as Claybury Cathedral. But the irony of the eighteenth century is that Catherine was healthily interested in crimes and yet never found the real crime; and that she never really thought of it as an abbey, even when she thought of it most as an antiquity.

But there is a positive as well as a negative way in which her greatness, like Shakespeare's, illuminates history and politics, because it illuminates everything. She understood every intricacy of the upper middle class and the minor gentry, which were to make so much of the mental life of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is said that she ignored the poor and disregarded their opinions. She did, but not more than all our Governments and all our Acts of Parliaments have done. And at least she did consistently ignore them; she ignored where she was ignorant. Well it would have been for the world if others had ignored the working-class until they understood it as well as she did the middle class. She was not a student of sociology; she did not study the poor. But she did study the students—or at least the social types which were to become the students of the poor. She knew her own class, and knew it without illusions; and there is much light on later problems to be found in her delicate delineation of vanities and snobberies and patronage. She had to

do with the human heart; and it is that which cometh out of the heart that defileth a nation, philanthropy, efficiency, organization, social reform. And if the weaker brethren still wonder why we should find in Baby Week or Welfare Work a dangerous spirit, from which its best adherents find it hard to free themselves, if they doubt how such a danger can be reconciled with the personal delicacy and idealism of many of the women who work such things, if they think that fine words or even fine feelings will guarantee a respect for the personality of the poor, I really do not know that they could do better than sit down, I trust not for the first time, to the reading of "Emma."

For all this that has happened since might well be called the Evolution of Emma. That unique and formidable institution, the English Lady, has, indeed, become much more of a public institution; that is, she has made the same mistakes on a much larger scale. The softer fastidiousness and finer pride of the more gracious eighteenth-century heroine may seem to make her a shadow by comparison. It seems cruel to say that the breaking off of Harriet's humbler engagement foreshadows the indiscriminate development of Divorce for the Poor. It seems horrible to say that Emma's small matchmaking has in it the seed of the pestilence of Eugenics. But it is true. With a gentleness and justice and sympathy with good intentions, which clear her from the charge of common cynicism, the great novelist does find the spring of her heroine's errors, and of many of ours. That spring is a philanthropy, and even a generosity, secretly founded on gentility. Emma Woodhouse was a wit, she was a good woman, she was an individual with a right to her own opinion; but it was because she was a lady that she acted as she did, and thought she had a right to act as she did. She is the type in

fiction of a whole race of English ladies, in fact, for whom refinement is religion. Her claim to oversee and order the social things about her consisted in being refined; she would not have admitted that being rich had anything to do with it; but as a fact it had everything to do with it. If she had been very much richer, if she had had one of the great modern fortunes, if she had had the wider modern opportunities (for the rich) she would have thought it her duty to act on the wider modern scale; she would have had public spirit and political grasp. She would have dealt with a thousand Robert Martins and a thousand Harriet Smiths, and made the same muddle about all of them. That is what we mean about things like Baby Week—and if there had been a baby in the story, Miss Woodhouse would certainly have seen all its educational needs with a brilliant clearness. And we do not mean that the work is done entirely by Mrs. Pardiggle; we mean that much of it is done by Miss Woodhouse. But it is done because she *is* Miss Woodhouse and not Martha *Muggins or Jemima Jones; because the Lady* Bountiful is a lady first, and will bestow every bounty but freedom.

It is noted that there are few traces of the French Revolution in Miss Austen's novels; but, indeed, there have been few traces of it in Miss Austen's country. The peculiarity which has produced the situation I describe is really this: that the new sentiment of humanitarianism has come, when the old sentiment of aristocracy has not gone. Social superiors have not really lost any old privileges; they have gained new privileges, including that of being superior in philosophy and philanthropy as well as in riches and refinement. No revolution has shaken their secret security or menaced them with the awful peril of becoming no more than men. Therefore

their social reform is but their social refinement grown restless. And in this old teacup comedy can be found, far more clearly appreciated than in more ambitious books about problems and politics, the psychology of this mere restlessness in the rich, when it first stirred upon its cushions. Jane Austen described a narrow class, but so truthfully that she has much to teach about its after adventures, when it remained narrow as a class and broadened only as a sect.

XXX. Tennyson

I HAVE been glancing over two or three of the appreciations of Tennyson appropriate to his centenary, and have been struck with a curious tone of coldness towards him in almost all quarters. Now this is really a very peculiar thing. For it is a case of coldness to quite brilliant and unquestionable literary merit. Whether Tennyson was a great poet I shall not discuss. I understand that one has to wait about eight hundred years before discussing that; and my only complaint against the printers of my articles is that they will not wait even for much shorter periods. But that Tennyson was a poet is as solid and certain as that Roberts is a billiard-player. That Tennyson was an astonishingly good poet is as solid and certain as that Roberts is an astonishingly good billiard-player. Even in these matters of art there are some things analogous to matters of fact. It is no good disputing about tastes—partly because some tastes are beyond dispute. If anyone tells me that

> There is fallen a splendid tear
> From the passion-flower at the gate;

or that

> Tears from the depth of some divine despair

is not fine poetry, I am quite prepared to treat him as I would one who said that grass was not green or that I was not corpulent. And by all common chances Tennyson ought to be preserved as a pleasure —a sensuous pleasure if you like, but certainly a

genuine one. There is no more reason for dropping Tennyson than for dropping Virgil. We do not mind Virgil's view of Augustus, nor need we mind Tennyson's view of Queen Victoria. Beauty is unanswerable, in a poem as much as in a woman. There were Victorian writers whose art is not perfectly appreciable apart from their enthusiasm. Kingsley's "Yeast" is a fine book, but not quite so fine a book as it seemed when one's own social passions were still yeasty. Browning and Coventry Patmore are justly admired, but they are most admired where they are most agreed with. But "St. Agnes' Eve" is an unimpeachably beautiful poem, whether one believes in St. Agnes or detests her. One would think that a man who had thus left indubitably good verse would receive natural and steady gratitude, like a man who left indubitably good wine to his nephew, or indubitably good pictures to the National Portrait Gallery. Nevertheless, as I have said, the tone of all the papers, modernist or old-fashioned, has been mainly frigid. What is the meaning of this?

I will ask permission to answer this question by abruptly and even brutally changing the subject. My remarks must, first of all, seem irrelevant even to effrontery; they shall prove their relevance later on. In turning the pages of one of the papers containing a such light and unsympathetic treatment of Tennyson, my eye catches the following sentence: "By the light of modern science and thought, we are in a position to see that each normal human being in some way repeats historically the life of the human race." This is a very typical modern assertion; that is, it is an assertion for which there is not and never has been a single spot or speck of proof. We know precious little about what the life of the human race has been; and none of our scientific conjectures about it bear the remotest resemblance to the actual

growth of a child. According to this theory, a baby begins by chipping flints and rubbing sticks together to find fire. One so often sees babies doing this. About the age of five the child, before the delighted eyes of his parents. founds a village community. By the time he is eleven it has become a small city state, the replica of ancient Athens. Encouraged by this, the boy proceeds, and before he is fourteen has founded the Roman Empire. But now his parents have a serious set-back. Having watched him so far, not only with pleasure, but with a very natural surprise, they must strengthen themselves to endure the spectacle of decay. They have now to watch their child going through the decline of the Western Empire and the Dark Ages. They see the invasion of the Huns and that of the Norsemen chasing each other across his expressive face. He seems a little happier after he has " repeated " the Battle of Chalons and the unsuccessful Siege of Paris ; and by the time he comes to the twelfth century, his boyish face is as bright as it was of old when he was " repeating " Pericles or Camillus. I have no space to follow this remarkable demonstration of how history repeats itself in the youth ; how he grows dismal at twenty-three to represent the end of Mediævalism, brightens because the Renaissance is coming, darkens again with the disputes of the later Reformation, broadens placidly through the thirties as the rational eighteenth century, till at last, about forty-three, he gives a great yell and begins to burn the house down, as a symbol of the French Revolution. Such (we shall all agree) is the ordinary development of a boy.

Now, seriously, does anyone believe a word of such bosh ? Does anyone think that a child will repeat the periods of human history ? Does anyone ever allow for a daughter in the Stone Age, or excuse a son because he is in the fourth century B.C. ? Yet the

writer who lays down this splendid and staggering lie calmly says that " by the light of modern science and thought we are in a position to *see* " that it is true. " Seeing " is a strong word to use of our conviction that icebergs are in the north, or that the earth goes round the sun. Yet anybody can use it of any casual or crazy biological fancy seen in some newspaper or suggested in some debating club. This is the rooted weakness of our time. Science, which means exactitude, has become the mother of all inexactitude.

This is the failure of the epoch, and this explains the partial failure of Tennyson. He was *par excellence* the poet of popular science—that is, of all such cloudy and ill-considered assertions as the above. He was the perfectly educated man of classics and the half-educated man of science. No one did more to encourage the colossal blunder that the survival of the fittest means the survival of the best. One might as well say that the survival of the fittest means the survival of the fattest. Tennyson's position has grown shaky because it rested not on any clear dogmas old or new, but on two or three temporary, we might say *desperate, compromises of his own day.* He grasped at Evolution, not because it was definite, but because it was indefinite; not because it was daring, but because it was safe. It gave him the hope that man might one day be an angel, and England a free democracy; but it soothed him with the assurance that neither of these alarming things would happen just yet. Virgil used his verbal felicities to describe the eternal idea of the Roman Imperium. Tennyson used his verbal felicities for the accidental equilibrium of the British Constitution. " To spare the humble and war down the proud," is a permanent idea for the policing of this planet. But that freedom should " slowly broaden down from precedent to precedent " merely happens to be the

policy of the English upper class; it has no vital sanction; it might be much better to broaden quickly. One can write great poetry about a truth or even about a falsehood, but hardly about a legal fiction. The misanthropic idea, as in Byron, is not a truth, but it is one of the immortal lies. As long as humanity exists, humanity can be hated. Wherever one shall gather by himself, Byron is in the midst of him. It is a common and recurrent mood to regard man as a hopeless Yahoo. But it is not a natural mood to regard man as a hopeful Yahoo, as the Evolutionists did, as a creature changing before one's eyes from bestial to beautiful, a creature whose tail has just dropped off while he is staring at a far-off divine event. This particular compromise between contempt and hope was an accident of Tennyson's time, and, like his liberal conservatism, will probably never be found again. His weakness was not being old-fashioned or new-fashioned, but being fashionable. His feet were set on things transitory and untenable, compromises and compacts of silence. Yet he was so perfect a poet that I fancy he will still be able to stand, even upon such clouds.

XXXI. The "Eatanswill Gazette"

THE other day someone presented me with a paper called the "Eatanswill Gazette." I need hardly say that I could not have been more startled if I had seen a coach coming down the road with old Mr. Tony Weller on the box. But, indeed, the case is much more extraordinary than that would be. Old Mr. Weller was a good man, a specially and seriously good man, a proud father, a very patient husband, a sane moralist, and a reliable ally. One could not be so very much surprised if somebody pretended to be Tony Weller. But the "Eatanswill Gazette" is definitely depicted in "Pickwick" as a dirty and unscrupulous rag, soaked with slander and nonsense. It was really interesting to find a modern paper proud to take its name. The case cannot be compared to anything so simple as a resurrection of one of the "Pickwick" characters; yet a very good parallel could easily be found. It is almost exactly as if a firm of solicitors were to open their offices to-morrow under the name of Dodson and Fogg.

It was at once apparent, of course, that the thing was a joke. But what was not apparent, what only grew upon the mind with gradual wonder and terror, was the fact that it had its serious side. The paper is published in the well-known town of Sudbury, in Suffolk. And it seems that there is a standing quarrel between Sudbury and the county town of Ipswich as to which was the town described by Dickens in his celebrated sketch of an election. Each town proclaims with passion that it was Eatanswill. If each

town proclaimed with passion that it was not Eatanswill, I might be able to understand it. Eatanswill, according to Dickens, was a town alive with loathsome corruption, hypocritical in all its public utterances, and venal in all its votes. Yet, two highly respectable towns compete for the honour of having been this particular cesspool, just as ten cities fought to be the birthplace of Homer. They claim to be its original as keenly as if they were claiming to be the original of More's "Utopia" or Morris's "Earthly Paradise." They grow seriously heated over the matter. The men of Ipswich say warmly, "It must have been our town; for Dickens says it was corrupt, and a more corrupt town than our town you couldn't have met in a month." The men of Sudbury reply with rising passion, "Permit us to tell you, gentlemen, that our town was quite as corrupt as your town any day of the week. Our town was a common nuisance; and we defy our enemies to question it." "Perhaps you will tell us," sneer the citizens of Ipswich, "that your politics were ever as thoroughly filthy as——" "As filthy as anything," answer the Sudbury men, undauntedly. "Nothing in politics could be filthier. Dickens must have noticed how disgusting we were." "And could he have failed to notice," the others reason indignantly, "how disgusting we were? You could smell us a mile off. You Sudbury fellows may think yourselves very fine, but let me tell you that, compared to our city, Sudbury was an honest place." And so the controversy goes on. It seems to me to be a new and odd kind of controversy.

Naturally, an outsider feels inclined to ask why Eatanswill should be either one or the other. As a matter of fact, I fear Eatanswill was every town in the country. It is surely clear that when Dickens described the Eatanswill election he did not mean it

as a satire on Sudbury or a satire on Ipswich; he meant it as a satire on England. The Eatanswill election is not a joke against Eatanswill; it is a joke against elections. If the satire is merely local, it practically loses its point; just as the "Circumlocution Office" would lose its point if it were not supposed to be a true sketch of all Government offices; just as the Lord Chancellor in "Bleak House" would lose his point if he were not supposed to be symbolic and representative of all Lord Chancellors. The whole moral meaning would vanish if we supposed that Oliver Twist had got by accident into an exceptionally bad workhouse, or that Mr. Dorrit was in the only debtors' prison that was not well managed. Dickens was making game, not of places, but of methods. He poured all his powerful genius into trying to make the people ashamed of the methods. But he seems only to have succeeded in making people proud of the places. In any case, the controversy is conducted in a truly extraordinary way. No one seems to allow for the fact that, after all, Dickens was writing a novel, and a highly fantastic novel at that. Facts in support of Sudbury or Ipswich are quoted not only from the story itself, which is wild and wandering enough, but even from the yet wilder narratives which incidentally occur in the story, such as Sam Weller's description of how his father, on the way to Eatanswill, tipped all the voters into the canal. This may quite easily be (to begin with) an entertaining tarradiddle of Sam's own invention, told, like many other even more improbable stories, solely to amuse Mr. Pickwick. Yet the champions of these two towns positively ask each other to produce a canal, or to fail for ever in their attempt to prove themselves the most corrupt town in England. As far as I remember, Sam's story of the canal ends with Mr. Pickwick eagerly asking

whether everybody was rescued, and Sam solemnly replying that one old gentleman's hat was found, but that he was not sure whether his head was in it. If the canal is to be taken as realistic, why not the hat and the head ? If these critics ever find the canal I recommend them to drag it for the body of the old gentleman.

Both sides refuse to allow for the fact that the characters in the story are comic characters. For instance, Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, the eminent student of Dickens, writes to the "Eatanswill Gazette" to say that Sudbury, a small town, could not have been Eatanswill, because one of the candidates speaks of its great manufactures. But obviously one of the candidates would have spoken of its great manufactures if it had had nothing but a row of apple-stalls. One of the candidates might have said that the commerce of Eatanswill eclipsed Carthage, and covered every sea ; it would have been quite in the style of Dickens. But when the champion of Sudbury answers him, he does not point out this plain mistake. He answers by making another mistake exactly of the same kind. He says that Eatanswill was not a busy, important place. And his odd reason is that Mrs. Pott said she was dull there. But obviously Mrs. Pott would have said she was dull anywhere. She was setting her cap at Mr. Winkle. Moreover, it was the whole point of her character in any case. Mrs. Pott was that kind of woman. If she had been in Ipswich she would have said that she ought to be in London. If she was in London she would have said that she ought to be in Paris. The first disputant proves Eatanswill grand because a servile candidate calls it grand. The second proves it dull because a discontented woman calls it dull.

The great part of the controversy seems to be conducted in the spirit of highly irrelevant realism.

Sudbury cannot be Eatanswill, because there was a fancy-dress shop at Eatanswill, and there is no record of a fancy-dress shop at Sudbury. Sudbury must be Eatanswill because there were heavy roads outside Eatanswill, and there are heavy roads outside Sudbury. Ipswich cannot be Eatanswill, because Mrs. Leo Hunter's country seat would not be near a big town. Ipswich must be Eatanswill because Mrs. Leo Hunter's country seat would be near a large town. Really, Dickens might have been allowed to take liberties with such things as these, even if he had been mentioning the place by name. If I were writing a story about the town of Limerick, I should take the liberty of introducing a bun-shop without taking a journey to Limerick to see whether there was a bun-shop there. If I wrote a romance about Torquay, I should hold myself free to introduce a house with a green door without having studied a list of all the coloured doors in the town. But if, in order to make it particularly obvious that I had not meant the town for a photograph either of Torquay or Limerick, I had gone out of my way to give the place a wild, fictitious name of my own, I think that in that case I should be justified in tearing my hair with rage if the people of Limerick or Torquay began to argue about bun-shops and green doors. No reasonable man would expect Dickens to be so literal as all that even about Bath or Bury St. Edmunds, which do exist; far less need he be literal about Eatanswill, which didn't exist.

I must confess, however, that I incline to the Sudbury side of the argument. This does not only arise from the sympathy which all healthy people have for small places as against big ones; it arises from some really good qualities in this particular Sudbury publication. First of all, the champions of Sudbury seem to be more open to the sensible and humorous

view of the book than the champions of Ipswich—at least, those that appear in this discussion. Even the Sudbury champion, bent on finding realistic clothes, rebels (to his eternal honour) when Mr. Percy Fitzgerald tries to show that Bob Sawyer's famous statement that he was neither Buff nor Blue, "but a sort of plaid," must have been copied from some silly man at Ipswich who said that his politics were "half and half." Anybody might have made either of the two jokes. But it was the whole glory and meaning of Dickens that he confined himself to making jokes that anybody might have made a little better than anybody would have made them.

XXXII. Fairy-Tales

SOME solemn and superficial people (for nearly all very superficial people are solemn) have declared that the fairy-tales are immoral; they base this upon some accidental circumstances or regrettable incidents in the war between giants and boys, some cases in which the latter indulged in unsympathetic deceptions or even in practical jokes. The objection, however, is not only false, but very much the reverse of the facts. The fairy-tales are at root not only moral in the sense of being innocent, but moral in the sense of being didactic, moral in the sense of being moralizing. It is all very well to talk of the freedom of fairyland, but there was precious little freedom in fairyland by the best official accounts. Mr. W. B. Yeats and other sensitive modern souls, feeling that modern life is about as black a slavery as ever oppressed mankind (they are right enough there), have especially described elfland as a place of utter ease and abandonment—a place where the soul can turn every way at will like the wind. Science denounces the idea of a capricious God; but Mr. Yeats's school suggests that in that world every one is a capricious god. Mr. Yeats himself has said a hundred times in that sad and splendid literary style which makes him the first of all poets now writing in English (I will not say of all English poets, for Irishmen are familiar with the practice of physical assault), he has, I say, called up a hundred times the

picture of the terrible freedom of the fairies, who typify the ultimate anarchy of art:

> Where nobody grows old or weary or wise,
> Where nobody grows old or godly or grave.

But, after all (it is a shocking thing to say), I doubt whether Mr. Yeats really knows the real philosophy of the fairies. He is not simple enough; he is not stupid enough. Though I say it who should not, in good sound human stupidity I would knock Mr. Yeats out any day. The fairies like me better than Mr. Yeats; they can take me in more. And I have my doubts whether this feeling of the free, wild spirits on the crest of hill or wave is really the central and simple spirit of folk-lore. I think the poets have made a mistake: because the world of the fairy-tales is a brighter and more varied world than ours, they have fancied it less moral; really it is brighter and more varied because it is more moral. Suppose a man could be born in a modern prison. It is impossible, of course, because nothing human can happen in a modern prison, though it could sometimes in an ancient dungeon. A modern prison is always inhuman, even when it is not inhumane. But suppose a man were born in a modern prison, and grew accustomed to the deadly silence and the disgusting indifference; and suppose he were then suddenly turned loose upon the life and laughter of Fleet Street. He would, of course, think that the literary men in Fleet Street were a free and happy race; yet how sadly, how ironically, is this the reverse of the case! And so again these toiling serfs in Fleet Street, when they catch a glimpse of the fairies, think the fairies are utterly free. But fairies are like journalists in this and many other respects. Fairies and journalists have an apparent gaiety and a delusive beauty. Fairies and journalists seem to be lovely and lawless;

they seem to be both of them too exquisite to descend to the ugliness of everyday duty. But it is an illusion created by the sudden sweetness of their presence. Journalists live under law; and so in fact does fairyland.

If you really read the fairy-tales, you will observe that one idea runs from one end of them to the other —*the idea that peace and happiness can only exist on some condition*. This idea, which is the core of ethics, is the core of the nursery-tales. The whole happiness of fairyland hangs upon a thread, upon one thread. Cinderella may have a dress woven on supernatural looms and blazing with uncarthly brilliance; but she must be back when the clock strikes twelve. The king may invite fairies to the christening, but he must invite all the fairies or frightful results will follow. Bluebeard's wife may open all doors but one. A promise is broken to a cat, and the whole world goes wrong. A promise is broken to a yellow dwarf, and the whole world goes wrong. A girl may be the bride of the God of Love himself if she never tries to see him; she sees him, and he vanishes away. A *girl is given a box on condition she does not open it*; she opens it, and all the evils of this world rush out at her. A man and woman are put in a garden on condition that they do not eat one fruit: they eat it, and lose their joy in all the fruits of the earth.

This great idea, then, is the backbone of all folk-lore—the idea that all happiness hangs on one thin veto; all positive joy depends on one negative. Now, it is obvious that there are many philosophical and religious ideas akin to or symbolized by this; but it is not with them I wish to deal here. It is surely obvious that all ethics ought to be taught to this fairy-tale tune; that, if one does the thing forbidden, one imperils all the things provided. A man who breaks his promise to his wife ought to be reminded

that, even if she is a cat, the case of the fairy-cat shows that such conduct may be incautious. A burglar just about to open someone else's safe should be playfully reminded that he is in the perilous posture of the beautiful Pandora: he is about to lift the forbidden lid and loosen evils unknown. The boy eating someone's apples in someone's apple tree should be a reminder that he has come to a mystical moment of his life, when one apple may rob him of all others. This is the profound morality of fairy-tales; which, so far from being lawless, go to the root of all law. Instead of finding (like common books of ethics) a rationalistic basis for each Commandment, they find the great mystical basis for all Commandments. We are in this fairyland on sufferance; it is not for us to quarrel with the conditions under which we enjoy this wild vision of the world. The vetoes are indeed extraordinary, but then so are the concessions. The idea of property, the idea of someone else's apples, is a rum idea; but then the idea of there being any apples is a rum idea. It is strange and weird that I cannot with safety drink ten bottles of champagne; but then the champagne itself is strange and weird, if you come to that. If I have drunk of the fairies' drink it is but just I should drink by the fairies' rules. We may not see the direct logical connexion between three beautiful silver spoons and a large ugly policeman; but then who in fairy-tales ever could see the direct logical connexion between three bears and a giant, or between a rose and a roaring beast? Not only can these fairy-tales be enjoyed because they are moral, but morality can be enjoyed because it puts us in fairyland, in a world at once of wonder and of war.

XXXIII. The Future of Dickens

THE hardest thing to remember about our own time, of course, is simply that it is a time; we all instinctively think of it as the Day of Judgment. But all the things in it which belong to it merely as this time will probably be rapidly turned upside down; all the things that can pass will pass. It is not merely true that all old things are already dead; it is also true that all new things are already dead; for the only undying things are the things that are neither new nor old. The more you are up with this year's fashion, the more (in a sense) you are already behind next year's. Consequently, in attempting to decide whether an author will, as it is cantly expressed, live, it is necessary to have very firm convictions about what part, if any part, of man is unchangeable. And it is very hard to have this if you have not a religion or, at least, a dogmatic philosophy.

The equality of men needs preaching quite as much as regards the ages as regards the classes of men. To feel infinitely superior to a man in the twelfth century is just precisely as snobbish as to feel infinitely superior to a man in the Old Kent Road. There are differences between the man and us, there may be superiorities in us over the man; but our sin in both cases consists in thinking of the small things wherein we differ when we ought to be confounded and intoxicated by the terrible and joyful matters in which we are at one. But here again the difficulty always is that the things near us seem larger than they are, and so seem to be a permanent part of mankind, when

they may really be only one of its parting modes of expression. Few people, for instance, realize that a time may easily come when we shall see the great outburst of Science in the nineteenth century as something quite as splendid, brief, unique, and ultimately abandoned, as the outburst of Art at the Renaissance. Few people realize that the general habit of fiction, of telling tales in prose, may fade, like the general habit of the ballad, of telling tales in verse, has for the time faded. Few people realize that reading and writing are only arbitrary, and perhaps temporary sciences, like heraldry.

The immortal mind will remain, and by that writers like Dickens will be securely judged. That Dickens will have a high place in permanent literature there is, I imagine, no prig surviving to deny. But though all prediction is in the dark, I would devote this chapter to suggesting that his place in nineteenth-century England will not only be high, but altogether the highest. At a certain period of his contemporary fame, an average Englishman would have said that there were at that moment in England about five or six able and equal novelists. He could have made a list, Dickens, Bulwer Lytton, Thackeray, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, perhaps more. Forty years or more have passed and some of them have slipped to a lower place. Some would now say that the highest platform is left to Thackeray and Dickens; some to Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot; some to Dickens, Thackeray, and Charlotte Brontë. I venture to offer the proposition that when more years have passed and more weeding has been effected Dickens will dominate the whole England of the nineteenth century; he will be left on that platform alone.

I know that this is an almost impertinent thing to assert, and that its tendency is to bring in those disparaging discussions of other writers in which Mr.

Swinburne brilliantly embroiled himself in his suggestive study of Dickens. But my disparagement of the other English Novelists is wholly relative and not in the least positive. It is certain that men will always return to such a writer as Thackeray, with his rich emotional autumn, his feeling that life is a sad but sacred retrospect in which at least we should forget nothing. It is not likely that wise men will forget him. So, for instance, wise and scholarly men do from time to time return to the lyrists of French Renaissance, to the delicate poignancy of Du Bellay: so they will go back to Thackeray. But I mean that Dickens will bestride and dominate our time as the vast figure of Rabelais dominates Du Bellay, dominates the Renaissance and the world.

Let me put a negative reason first. The particular things for which Dickens is condemned (and justly condemned) by his critics, are precisely those things which have never prevented a man from being immortal. The chief of them is the unquestionable fact that he wrote an enormous amount of bad work. This does lead to a man being put below his place in his own time: it does not affect his permanent place, to all appearance, at all. Shakespeare, for instance, and Wordsworth wrote not only an enormous amount of bad work, but an enormous amount of enormously bad work. Humanity edits such writers' works for them. Virgil was mistaken in cutting out his inferior lines; we would have undertaken the job. Moreover in the particular case of Dickens there are special reasons for regarding his bad work, as I have previously suggested, under a kind of general ambition that had nothing to do with his special genius; an ambition to be a public provider of everything, a warehouse of all human emotions. He held a kind of literary day of judgment. He distributed bad characters as punishments and good characters as

rewards. My meaning can be best conveyed by one instance out of many. The character of the kind old Jew in " Our Mutual Friend " (a needless and unconvincing character) was actually introduced because some Jewish correspondent complains that the bad old Jew in " Oliver Twist " conveyed the suggestion that all Jews were bad. The principle is so light-headedly absurd that it is hard to imagine any literary man submitting to it for an instant. If ever he invented a bad auctioneer he must immediately balance him with a good auctioneer; if he should have conceived an unkind philanthropist, he must on the spot, with whatever natural agony and toil, imagine a kind philanthropist. The complaint is frantic; yet Dickens, who tore people in pieces for much fairer complaints, liked this complaint of his Jewish correspondent. It pleased him to be mistaken for a public arbiter: it pleased him to be asked (in a double sense) to judge Israel. All this is so much another thing, a non-literary vanity, that there is much less difficulty than usual in separating it from his serious genius: and by his serious genius, I need hardly say, I mean his comic genius. Such irrelevant ambitions as this are easily passed over, like the sonnets of great statesmen. We feel that such things can be set aside, as the ignorant experiments of men otherwise great, like the politics of Professor Tyndall or the philosophy of Professor Haeckel. Hence, I think, posterity will not care that Dickens has done bad work, but will know that he has done good.

Again, the other chief accusation against Dickens was that his characters and their actions were exaggerated and impossible. But this only meant that they were exaggerated and impossible as compared with the modern world and with certain writers (like Thackeray or Trollope) who were making a very exact copy of the manners of the modern world. Some

people, oddly enough, have suggested that Dickens has suffered or will suffer from the change of manners. Surely this is irrational. It is not the creators of the impossible who will suffer from the process of time: Mr. Bunsby can never be any more impossible than he was when Dickens made him. The writers who will obviously suffer from time will be the careful and realistic writers, the writers who have observed every detail of the fashion of this world which passeth away. It is surely obvious that there is nothing so fragile as a fact, that a fact flies away quicker than a fancy. A fancy will endure for two thousand years. For instance, we all have fancy for an entirely fearless man, a hero; and the Achilles of Homer still remains. But exactly the thing we do not know about Achilles is how far he was possible. The realistic narrators of the time are all forgotten (thank God), so we cannot tell whether Homer slightly exaggerated or wildly exaggerated or did not exaggerate at all, the personal activity of a Mycenæan captain in battle; for the fancy has survived the facts. So the fancy of Podsnap may survive the facts of English commerce: and no one will know whether Podsnap was possible, but only know that he is desirable, like Achilles.

The positive argument for the permanence of Dickens comes back to the thing that can only be stated and cannot be discussed: creation. He made things which nobody else could possibly make. He made Dick Swiveller in a very different sense from that in which Thackeray made Colonel Newcome. Thackeray's creation was observation: Dickens's was poetry, and is therefore permanent. But there is one other test that can be added. The immortal writer, I conceive, is commonly he who does something universal in a special manner. I mean that he does something interesting to all men in a way in which only one man or one land can do. Other men in that

land, who do only what other men in other lands are doing as well, tend to have a great reputation in their day and to sink slowly into a second or a third or a fourth place. A parallel from war will make the point clear. I cannot think that anyone will doubt that, although Wellington and Nelson were always bracketed, Nelson will steadily become more important and Wellington less. For the fame of Wellington rests upon the fact that he was a good soldier in the service of England, exactly as twenty similar men were good soldiers in the service of Austria or Prussia or France. But Nelson is the symbol of a special mode of attack, which is at once universal and yet especially English, the sea. Now Dickens is at once as universal as the sea and as English as Nelson. Thackeray and George Eliot and the other great figures of that great England, were comparable to Wellington in this, that the kind of thing they were doing—realism, the acute study of intellectual things—numerous men in France, Germany and Italy were doing as well or better than they. But Dickens was really doing something universal, yet something that no one but an Englishman could do. This is attested by the fact that he and Byron are the men who, like pinnacles, strike the eye of the continent. The points would take long to study: yet they may take only a moment to indicate. No one but an Englishman could have filled his books at once with a furious caricature and with a positively furious kindness. In more central countries, full of cruel memories of political change, caricature is always inhumane. No one but an Englishman could have described the democracy as consisting of free men, but yet of funny men. In other countries where the democratic issue has been more bitterly fought, it is felt that unless you describe a man as dignified you are describing him as a slave.

This is the only final greatness of a man: that he does for all the world what all the world cannot do for itself. Dickens, I believe, did it.

The hour of absinthe is over. We shall not be much further troubled with the little artists who found Dickens too sane for their sorrows and too clean for their delights. But we have a long way to travel before we get back to what Dickens meant: and the passage is along a rambling English road, a twisting road such as Mr. Pickwick travelled. But this at least is part of what he meant; that comradeship and serious joy are not interludes in our travel; but that rather our travels are interludes in comradeship and joy, which through God shall endure for ever. The inn does not point to the road; the road points to the inn. And all roads point at last to an ultimate inn, where we shall meet Dickens and all his characters: and when we drink again it shall be from the great flagons in the tavern at the end of the world.

XXXIV. Milton and Merry England

MR. FREEMAN, in contributing to the "London Mercury" some of those critical analyses which we all admire, remarked about myself (along with compliments only too generous and strictures almost entirely just) that there was very little autobiography in my writings. I hope the reader will not have reason to curse him for this kindly provocation, watching me assume the graceful poses of Marie Bashkirtseff. But I feel tempted to plead it in extenuation or excuse for this article, which can hardly avoid being egotistical. For though it concerns one of those problems of literature, of philosophy and of history that certainly interest me more than my own psychology, it is one on which I can hardly explain myself without seeming to expose myself.

That valuable public servant, "The Gentleman with the Duster," has passed on from Downing Street, from polishing up the Mirrors and polishing off the Ministers, to a larger world of reflections in "The Glass of Fashion." I call the glass a world of reflections rather than a world of shadows; especially as I myself am one of those tenuous shades. And the matter which interests me here is that the critic in question complains that I have been very unjust to Puritans and Puritanism, and especially to a certain ethical idealism in them, which he declares to have been more essential than the Calvinism of which I "make so much." He puts the point in a genial but somewhat fantastic fashion by saying that the world owes something to the jokes of Mr. G. K. Chesterton,

but more to the moral earnestness of John Milton. This involves rather a dizzy elevation than a salutary depression; and the comparison is rather too overwhelming to be crushing. For I suppose the graceful duster of mirrors himself would hardly feel crushed, if I told him he did not hold the mirror up to Nature quite so successfully as Shakespeare. Nor can I be described as exactly reeling from the shock of being informed that I am a less historic figure than Milton. I know not how to answer, unless it be in the noble words of Sam Weller: "That's what we call a self-evident proposition, as the cat's meat-man said to the housemaid when she said he was no gentleman." But for all that I have a controversial issue with the critic about the moral earnestness of Milton, and I have a confession to make which will seem to many only too much in the personal manner referred to by Mr. Freeman.

My first impulse to write, and almost my first impulse to think, was a revolt of disgust with the Decadents and the æsthetic pessimism of the 'nineties. It is now almost impossible to bring home to anybody, even to myself, how final that *fin de siècle* seemed to be; not the end of the century but the end of the world. To a boy his first hatred is almost as immortal as his first love. He does not realize that the objects of either can alter; and I did not know that the twilight of the gods was only a mood. I thought that all the wit and wisdom in the world was banded together to slander and depress the world, and in becoming an optimist I had the feelings of an outlaw. Like Prince Florizel of Bohemia, I felt myself to be alone in a luxurious Suicide Club. But even the death seemed to be a living or rather everlasting death. To-day the whole thing is merely dead; it was not sufficiently immortal to be damned. But then the image of Dorian Gray was really an idol, with some-

thing of the endless youth of a god. To-day the picture of Dorian Gray has really grown old. Dodo then was not merely an amusing female; she was the eternal feminine. To-day the Dodo is extinct. Then, above all, every one claiming intelligence insisted on what was called "Art for art's sake." To-day even the biographer of Oscar Wilde proposes to abandon "art for art's sake," and to substitute "art for life's sake." But at the time I was more inclined to substitute "no art, for God's sake." I would rather have had no art at all than one which occupies itself in matching shades of peacock and turquoise for a decorative scheme of blue devils. I started to think it out, and the more I thought of it the more certain I grew that the whole thing was a fallacy; that art could not exist apart from, still less in opposition to, life; especially the life of the soul, which is salvation; and that great art never had been so much detached as that from conscience and common sense, or from what my critic would call moral earnestness. Unfortunately, by the time I had exposed it as a fallacy, it had entirely evaporated as a fashion. Since then I have taken universal annihilations more lightly. But I can still be stirred, as man always can be by memories of their first excitements or ambitions, by anything that shows the cloven hoof of that particular blue devil. I am still ready to knock him about, though I no longer think he has a cloven hoof or even a lame leg to stand on. But for all that there is one real argument which I still recognize on his side; and that argument is in a single word. There is still one word which the æsthete can whisper; and the whisper will bring back all my childish fears that the æsthete may be right after all. There is one name that does seem to me a strong argument for the decadent doctrine that "art is unmoral." When that name is uttered, the world of Wilde and Whistler

comes back with all its cold levity and cynical connoisseurship. The butterfly becomes a burden and the green carnation flourishes like the green bay-tree. For the moment I do believe in "art for art's sake." And that name is John Milton.

It does really seem to me that Milton was an artist, and nothing but an artist; and yet so great an artist as to sustain by his own strength the idea that art can exist alone. He seems to me an almost solitary example of a man of magnificent genius whose greatness does not depend at all upon moral earnestness, or upon anything connected with morality. His greatness is in a style, and a style which seems to me rather unusually separate from its substance. What is the exact nature of the pleasure which I, for one, take in reading and repeating some such lines, for instance, as those familiar ones:

> Dying put on the weeds of Dominic
> Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised.

So far as I can see, the whole effect is in a certain unexpected order and arrangement of words, independent and distinguished, like the perfect manners of an eccentric gentleman. Say instead "Put on in death the weeds of Dominic," and the whole unique dignity of the line has broken down. It is something in the quiet but confident inversion of "Dying put on" which exactly achieves that perpetual slight novelty which Aristotle profoundly said was the language of poetry. The idea itself is at best an obvious and even conventional condemnation of superstition, and in the ultimate sense a rather superficial one. Coming where it does, indeed, it does not so much suggest moral earnestness as rather a moralizing priggishness. For it is dragged in very laboriously into the very last place where it is wanted, before a

splendidly large and luminous vision of the world newly created, and the first innocence of earth and sky. It is that passage in which the wanderer through space approaches Eden; one of the most unquestionable triumphs of all human literature. That one book at least of "Paradise Lost" could claim the more audacious title of "Paradise Found." But if it was necessary for the poet going to Eden to pass through Limbo, why was it necessary to pass through Lambeth and Little Bethel? Why should he go there via Rome and Geneva? Why was it necessary to compare the debris of Limbo to the details of ecclesiastical quarrels in the seventeenth century, when he was moving in a world before the dawn of all the centuries, or the shadow of the first quarrel? Why did he talk as if the Church was reformed before the world was made, or as if Latimer lit his candle before God made the sun and moon? Matthew Arnold made fun of those who claimed divine sanction for episcopacy by suggesting that when God said "Let there be light," He also said "Let there be Bishops." But his own favourite Milton went very near suggesting that when God said "Let there be light," He soon afterwards remarked "Let there be Nonconformists." I do not feel this merely because my own religious sympathies happen to be rather on the other side. It is indeed probable that Milton did not appreciate a whole world of ideas in which he saw merely the corruptions: the idea of relics and symbolic acts and the drama of the deathbed. It does not enlarge his place in the philosophy of history that this should be his only relation either to the divine demagogy of the Dogs of God or to the fantastical fraternity of the Jugglers of God. But I should feel exactly the same incongruity if the theological animus were the other way. It would be equally disproportionate if the approach to Eden

were interrupted with jokes against Puritans, or if Limbo were littered with steeple-crowned hats and the scrolls of interminable Calvinistic sermons. We should still feel that a book of "Paradise Lost" was not the right place for a passage from Hudibras. So far from being morally earnest, in the best sense, there is something almost philosophically frivolous in the incapacity to think firmly and magnanimously about the First Things, and the primary colours of the creative palette, without spoiling the picture with this ink-slinging of sectarian politics. Speaking from the standpoint of moral earnestness, I confess it seems to me trivial and spiteful and even a little vulgar. After which impertinent criticism, I will now repeat in a loud voice, and for the mere lust of saying it as often as possible:

> Dying put on the weeds of Dominic
> Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised.

And the exuberant joy I take in it is the nearest thing I have ever known to art for art's sake.

In short, it seems to me that Milton was a great artist, and that he was also a great accident. It was rather in the same sense that his master Cromwell was a great accident. It is not true that all the moral virtues were crystallized in Milton and his Puritans. It is not true that all the military virtues were concentrated in Cromwell and his Ironsides. There were masses of moral devotion on the other side, and masses of military valour on the other side. But it did so happen that Milton had more ability and success in literary expression, and Cromwell more ability and success in military science, than any of their many rivals. To represent Cromwell as a fiend or Milton as a hypocrite is to rush to another extreme and be ridiculous; they both believed sincerely enough in

certain moral ideas of their time. Only they were not, as seems to be supposed, the only moral ideas of their time. And they were not, in my private opinion, the best moral ideas of their time. One of them was the idea that wisdom is more or less weakened by laughter and a popular taste in pleasure; and we may call this moral earnestness if we like. But the point is that Cromwell did not succeed by his moral earnestness, but by his strategy; and Milton did not succeed by his moral earnestness, but by his style.

And, first of all, let me touch on the highest form of moral earnestness and the relation of Milton to the religious poetry of his day. "Paradise Lost" is certainly a religious poem; but, for many of its admirers, the religion is the least admirable part of it. The poet professes indeed to justify the ways of God to men; but I never heard of any men who read it in order to have them justified, as men do still read a really religious poem, like the dark and almost sceptical Book of Job. A poem can hardly be said to justify the ways of God, when its most frequent effect is admittedly to make people sympathize with Satan. In all this I am in a sense arguing against myself; for all my instincts, as I have said, are against the æsthetic theory that art so great can be wholly irreligious. And I agree that even in Milton there are gleams of Christianity. Nobody quite without them could have written the single line: "By the dear might of Him that walked the waves." But it is hardly too much to say that it is the one place where that Figure walks in the whole world of Milton. Nobody, I imagine, has ever been able to recognize Christ in the cold conqueror who drives a chariot in the war in heaven, like Apollo warring on the Titans. Nobody has ever heard Him in the stately disquisitions either of the Council in Heaven or of Paradise Regained. But, apart from all these

particular problems, it is surely the general truth that the great religious epic strikes us with a sense of disproportion; the sense of how little it is religious considering how manifestly it is great. It seems almost strange that a man should have written so much and so well without stumbling on Christian tradition.

Now in the age of Milton there was a riot of religious poetry. Most of it had moral earnestness, and much of it had splendid spiritual conviction. But most of it was not the poetry of the Puritans; on the contrary, it was mostly the poetry of the Cavaliers. The most real religion—we might say the most realistic religion—is not to be found in Milton, but in Vaughan, in Treherne, in Crashaw, in Herbert, and even in Herrick. The best proof of it is that the religion is alive to-day, as religion and not merely as literature. A Roman Catholic can read Crashaw, an Anglo-Catholic can read Herbert, in a direct devotional spirit; I gravely doubt whether many modern Congregationalists read the theology of "Paradise Lost" in that spirit. For the moment I mention only this purely religious emotion; I do not deny that Milton's poetry, like all great poetry, can awaken other great emotions. For instance, a man bereaved by one of the tragedies of the Great War might well find a stoical serenity in the great lines beginning "Nothing is here for tears." That sort of consolation is uttered, as nobly as it could be uttered, by Milton; but it might be uttered by Sophocles or Goethe, or even by Lucretius or Voltaire. But supposing that a man were seeking a more Christian kind of consolation, he would not find it in Milton at all, as he would find it in the lines beginning "They are all gone into the world of light." The whole of the two great Puritan epics do not contain all that is said in saying "O holy hope and high humility." Neither hope nor humility were Puritan specialities.

But it was not only in devotional mysticism that these Cavaliers could challenge the great Puritan; it was in a mysticism more humanistic and even more modern. They shine with that white mystery of daylight which many suppose to have dawned with Wordsworth and with Blake. In that sense they make earth mystical where Milton only made heaven material. Nor are they inferior in philosophic freedom; the single line of Crashaw, addressed to a woman, "By thy large draughts of intellectual day," is less likely, I fancy, to have been addressed by Adam to Eve, or by Milton to Mrs. Milton. It seems to me that these men were superior to Milton in magnanimity, in chivalry, in joy of life, in the balance of sanity and subtlety, in everything except the fact (not wholly remote from literary criticism) that they did not write so well as he did. But they wrote well enough to lift the load of materialism from the English name; and show us the shining fields of a paradise that is not wholly lost.

Of such was the Anti-Puritan party; and the reader may learn more about it from the author of "The Glass of Fashion." There he may form a general idea of how, but for the Puritans, England would have been abandoned to mere ribaldry and licence; blasted by the blasphemies of George Herbert; rolled in the mire of the vile materialism of Vaughan; tickled to ribald laughter by the cheap cynicism and tap-room familiarities of Crashaw and Treherne. But the same Cavalier tradition continued into the next age, and indeed into the next century; and the critic must extend his condemnation to include the brutal buffooneries of Bishop Ken or the gay and careless worldliness of Jeremy Collier. Nay, he must extend it to cover the last Tories who kept the tradition of the Jacobites; the careless merriment of Dean Swift, the godless dissipation of

Dr. Johnson. None of these men were Puritans; all of them were strong opponents of political and religious Puritanism. The truth is that English literature bears a very continuous and splendid testimony to the fact that England was not merely Puritan. Ben Jonson in "Bartholomew Fair" spoke for most English people, and certainly for most English poets. Anti-Puritanism was the one thing common to Shakespeare and Dryden, to Swift and Johnson, to Cobbett and Dickens. And the historical bias the other way has come, not from Puritan superiority, but simply from Puritan success. It was the political triumph of the party, in the Revolution and the resultant commercial industrialism, that suppressed the testimony of the populace and the poets. Loyalty died away in a few popular songs; the Cromwellians never had any popular song to die. English history has moved away from English literature. Our culture, like our agriculture, is at once very native and very neglected. And as this neglect is regrettable, if only as neglect of literature, I will pause in conclusion upon the later period, two generations after Milton, when the last of the true Tories drank wine with Bolingbroke or tea with Johnson.

The truth that is missed about the Tories of this tradition is that they were rebels. They had the virtues of rebels; they also had the vices of rebels. Swift had the fury of a rebel; Johnson the surliness of a rebel; Goldsmith the morbid sensibility of a rebel; and Scott, at the end of the process, something of the despair and mere retrospection of a defeated rebel. And the Whig school of literary criticism, like the Whig school of political history, has omitted or missed this truth about them, because it necessarily omitted the very existence of the thing against which they rebelled. For Macaulay and Thackeray and the

average of Victorian liberality the Revolution of 1688 was simply an emancipation, the defeat of the Stuarts was simply a downfall of tyranny and superstition; the politics of the eighteenth century were simply a progress leading up to the pure and happy politics of the nineteenth century; freedom slowly broadening down, etc., etc. This makes the attitude of the Tory rebels entirely meaningless; so that the critics in question have been forced to represent some of the greatest Englishmen who ever lived as a mere procession of lunatics and ludicrous eccentrics. But these rebels, right or wrong, can only be understood in relation to the real power against which they were rebelling; and their titanic figures can best be traced in the light of the lightning which they defied. That power was a positive thing; it was anything but a mere negative emancipation of everybody. It was as definite as the monarchy which it had replaced; for it was an aristocracy that replaced it. It was the oligarchy of the great Whig families, a very close corporation indeed, having Parliament for its legal form, but the new wealth for its essential substance. That is why these lingering Jacobites appear most picturesque when they are pitted against some of the princes of the new aristocratic order. That is why Bolingbroke remains in the memory, standing in his box at the performance of "Cato," and flinging forth his defiance to Marlborough. That is why Johnson remains rigid in his magnificent disdain, hurling his defiance at Chesterfield. Churchill and Chesterfield were not small men, either in personality or in power; they were brilliant ornaments of the triumph of the world. They represented the English governing class when it could really govern; the modern plutocracy when it still deserved to be called an aristocracy also. And the whole point of the position of these men of letters is that they were

denying and denouncing something which was growing every day in prestige and prosperity; which seemed to have, and indeed had, not only the present but the future on its side. The only thing it had not got on its side was the ancient tradition of the English populace. That populace was being more and more harried by evictions and enclosures, that its old common lands and yeoman freeholds might be added to the enormous estates of the all-powerful aristocracy. One of the Tory rebels has himself made that infamy immortal in the great lines of the "Deserted Village." At least, it is immortal in the sense that it can never now be lost for lovers of English literature; but even this record was for a long time lost to the public by under-valuation and neglect. In recent times the "Deserted Village" was very much of a deserted poem. But of that I may have occasion to speak later. The point for the moment is that the psychology of these men, in its evil as well as its good, is to be interpreted not so much in terms of a lingering loyalty as of a frustrated revolution. Some of them had, of course, elements of extravagance and morbidity peculiar to their own characters; but they grew ten times more extravagant and more morbid as their souls swelled within them at the success of the shameless and the insolence of the fortunate. I doubt whether anybody ever felt so bitter against the Stuarts. Now this misunderstanding has made a very regrettable gap in literary criticism. The masterpieces of these men are represented as much more crabbed or cranky or inconsequent than they really were, because their objective is not seen objectively. It is like judging the raving of some Puritan preacher without allowing for the fact that the Pope or the King had ever possessed any power at all. To ignore the fact of the great Whig families because of the legal fiction of a free Parliament is like ignoring

the feelings of the Christian martyrs about Nero, because of the legal fiction that the Imperator was only a military general. These fictions do not prevent imaginative persons from writing books like the "Apocalypse" or books like "Gulliver's Travels."

I will take only one example of what I mean by this purely literary misunderstanding: an example from "Gulliver's Travels" itself. The case of the under-valuation of Swift is a particularly subtle one, for Swift was really unbalanced as an individual, which has made it much easier for critics not to keep the rather delicate balance of justice about him. There is a superficial case for saying he was mad, apart from the physical accident of his madness; but the point is that even those who have realized that he was sometimes mad with rage have not realized what he was in a rage with. And there is a curious illustration of this in the conclusion of the story of Gulliver. Every one remembers the ugly business about the Yahoos, and the still uglier business about the real human beings who reminded the returned traveller of Yahoos; how Gulliver shrank at first from his friends, and would only gradually consent to sit near his wife. And everybody remembers the picturesque but hostile sketch which Thackeray gives of the satire and the satirist; of Swift as the black and evil blasphemer sitting down to write his terrible allegory, of which the only moral is that all things are, and always must be, valueless and vile. I say that everybody remembers both these literary passages; but, indeed, I fear that many remember the critical who do not really remember the creative passage, and that many have read Thackeray who have not read Swift.

Now it is here that purely literary criticism has a word to say. A man of letters may be mad or sane in his cerebral constitution; he may be right or

wrong in his political antipathies; he may be anything we happen to like or dislike from our own individual standpoint. But there is one thing to which a man of letters has a right, whatever he is, and that is a fair critical comprehension of any particular literary effect which he obviously aims at and achieves. He has a right to his climax, and a right not to be judged without reference to his climax. It would not be fair to leave out the beautiful last lines of "Paradise Lost" as mere bathos; without realizing that the poet had a fine intention in allowing that conclusion, after all the thunder and the trumps of doom, to fall and fade away on a milder note of mercy and reasonable hope. It would not be fair to stigmatize the incident of Ignorance, damned at the very doors of heaven at the end of Bunyan's book, as a mere blot of black Calvinist cruelty and spite, without realizing that the writer fully intended its fearful irony, like a last touch of the finger of fear. But this justice which is done to the Puritan masters of imagination has hardly been done to the great Tory master of irony. No critic I have read has noticed the real point and climax of that passage about the Yahoos. Swift leads up to it ruthlessly enough, for an artist of that sort is often ruthless; and it is increased by his natural talent for a sort of mad reality of detail, as in his description of the slowly diminished distance between himself and his wife at the dinner-table. But he was working up to something that he really wished to say, something which was well worth saying, but which few seem to have thought worth hearing. He suggests that he gradually lost the loathing for humanity with which the Yahoo parallel had inspired him, that although men are in many ways petty and animal, he came to feel them to be normal and tolerable; that the sense of their unworthiness now very seldom returns; and indeed

that there is only one thing that revives it. If one of these creatures exhibits Pride——

That is the voice of Swift, and the cry arraigning aristocracy. It is natural for a monkey to collect nuts, and it may be pardonable for John Churchill to collect guineas. But to think that John Churchill can be proud of his heap of guineas, can convert them into stars and coronets, and can carry that calm and classic face disdainful above the multitude! It is natural for she-monkeys to be mated somehow; but to think that the Duchess of Yarmouth is proud of being the Duchess of Yarmouth! It may not be surprising that the nobility should have scrambled like screaming Yahoos for the rags and ribbons of the Revolution, tripping up and betraying anybody and everybody in turn, with every dirty trick of treason, for anything and everything they could get. But that those of them who had got everything should then despise those who had got nothing, that the rich should sneer at the poor for having no part of the plunder, that this oligarchy of Yahoos should actually feel superior to anything or anybody—that does move the prophet of the losing side to an indignation which is something much deeper and nobler than the negative flippancies that we call blasphemy. Swift was perhaps more of a Jeremiah than an Isaiah, and a faulty Jeremiah at that; but in this great climax of his grim satire he is none the less a seer and a speaker of the things of God; because he gives the testimony of the strongest and most searching of human intellects to the profound truth of the meanness and imbecility of pride.

And the other men of the same tradition had essentially the same instinct. Johnson was in many ways unjust to Swift, just as Cobbett was afterwards unjust to Johnson. But looking back up the perspective of history we can all see that those three

great men were all facing the same way; that they all regretted the rise of a rapacious and paganized commercial aristocracy, and its conquest over the old popular traditions, which some would call popular prejudices. When Johnson said that the devil was the first Whig, he might have merely varied the phrase by saying that he was the first aristocrat. For the men of this Tory tradition, in spirit if not in definition, distinguished between the privilege of monarchy and that of the new aristocracy by a very tenable test. The mark of aristocracy is ambition. The King cannot be ambitious. We might put it now by saying that monarchy is authority; but in its essence aristocracy is always anarchy. But the men of that school did not criticize the oligarch merely as a rebel against those above; they were well aware of his activities as an oppresser of those below. This aspect, as has already been noted, was best described by a friend of Johnson, for whom Johnson had a very noble and rather unique appreciation—Oliver Goldsmith.

A recent and sympathetic critic in the "Mercury" used the phrase that Mr. Belloc had been anticipated by Disraeli in his view of England as having evolved into a Venetian oligarchy. The truth is that Disraeil was anticipated by Bolingbroke and the many highly intelligent men who agreed with him; and not least by Goldsmith. The whole view, including the very parallel with Venice, can be found stated with luminous logic and cogency in the "Vicar of Wakefield." And Goldsmith attacked the problem entirely from the popular side. Nobody can mistake his Toryism for a snobbish submission to a privilege or title:

> Princes and lords, the shadow of a shade,
> A breath can make them, as a breath has made:
> But a bold peasantry, a nation's pride,
> When once destroyed can never be supplied.

I hope he was wrong; but I sometimes have a horrible feeling that he may have been right.

But I have here, thank God, no cause for touching upon modern politics. I was educated, as much as my critic, in the belief that Whiggism was a pure deliverance; and I hope I am still as willing as he to respect Puritans for their individual virtue as well as for their individual genius. But it moves all my memories of the unmorality of the 'nineties to be charged with indifference to the importance of being earnest. And it is for the sake of English literature that I protest against the suggestion that we had no purity except Puritanism, or that only a man like the author of "Paradise Lost" could manage to be on the side of the angels.

.

On Peace Day I set up outside my house two torches, and twined them with laurel; because I thought at least there was nothing pacifist about laurel. But that night, after the bonfire and the fireworks had faded, a wind grew and blew with gathering violence, blowing away the rain. And in the morning I found one of the laurelled posts torn off and lying at random on the rainy ground; while the other still stood erect, green and glittering in the sun. I thought that the pagans would certainly have called it an omen; and it was one that strangely fitted my own sense of some great work half fulfilled and half frustrated. And I thought vaguely of that man in Virgil, who prayed that he might slay his foe and return to his country; and the gods heard half the prayer, and the other half was scattered to the winds. For I knew we were right to rejoice; since the tyrant was indeed slain and his tyranny fallen for ever; but I know not when we shall find our way back to our own land.

XXXV. Dedication to the Ballad of the White Horse

OF great limbs gone to chaos,
A great face turned to night—
Why bend above a shapeless shroud
Seeking in such archaic cloud
Sight of strong lords and light?

Where seven sunken Englands
Lie buried one by one,
Why should one idle spade, I wonder,
Shake up the dust of thanes like thunder
To smoke and choke the sun?

In cloud of clay so cast to heaven
What shape shall man discern?
These lords may light the mystery
Of mastery or victory,
And these ride high in history,
But these shall not return.

Gored on the Norman gonfalon
The Golden Dragon died;
We shall not wake with ballad strings
The good time of the smaller things,
We shall not see the holy kings
Ride down by Severn side.

Stiff, strange, and quaintly coloured
As the broidery of Bayeux
The England of that dawn remains,
And this of Alfred and the Danes
Seems like the tales a whole tribe feigns
Too English to be true.

A Gleaming Cohort

Of a good king on an island
 That ruled once on a time;
And as he walked by an apple tree
There came green devils out of the sea
With sea-plants trailing heavily
 And tracks of opal slime.

Yet Alfred is no fairy tale;
 His days as our days ran,
He also looked forth for an hour
On peopled plains and skies that lower,
From those few windows in the tower
 That is the head of a man.

But who shall look from Alfred's hood
 Or breathe his breath alive?
His century like a small dark cloud
Drifts far; it is an eyeless crowd,
Where the tortured trumpets scream aloud
 And the dense arrows drive.

Lady, by one light only
 We look from Alfred's eyes,
We know he saw athwart the wreck
The sign that hangs about your neck,
Where One more than Melchizedek
 Is dead and never dies.

Therefore I bring these rhymes to you.
 Who brought the cross to me,
Since on you flaming without flaw
I saw the sign that Guthrum saw
When he let break his ships of awe,
 And laid peace on the sea.

Ballad of the White Horse

Do you remember when we went
 Under a dragon moon,
And 'mid volcanic tints of night
Walked where they fought the unknown fight
And saw black trees on the battle-height,
 Black thorn on Ethandune ?

And I thought, " I will go with you,
 As man with God has gone,
And wander with a wandering star,
The wandering heart of things that are,
The fiery cross of love and war
 That like yourself, goes on."

O go you onward ; where you are
 Shall honour and laughter be,
Past purple forest and pearled foam,
God's winged pavilion free to roam,
Your face, that is a wandering home,
 A flying home for me.

Ride through the silent earthquake lands,
 Wide as a waste is wide,
Across these days like deserts, when
Pride and a little scratching pen
Have dried and split the hearts of men,
 Heart of the heroes, ride.

Up through an empty house of stars,
 Being what heart you are,
Up the inhuman steeps of space
As on a staircase go in grace,
Carrying the firelight on your face
 Beyond the loneliest star.

A Gleaming Cohort

Take these ; in memory of the hour
 We strayed a pace from home
And saw the smoke-hued hamlets, quaint
With Westland king and Westland saint,
And watched the western glory faint
 Along the road to Frome.

XXXVI. Book VI of the Ballad of the White Horse

ETHANDUNE · THE SLAYING OF THE CHIEFS

AS the sea flooding the flat sands
Flew on the sea-born horde,
The two hosts shocked with dust and din,
Left of the Latian paladin,
Clanged all Prince Harold's howling kin
On Colan and the sword.

Crashed in the midst on Marcus,
Ogier with Guthrum by,
And westward of such central stir,
Far to the right and faintlier,
The house of Elf the harp player,
Struck Eldred's with a cry.

The centre swat for weariness,
Stemming the screaming horde,
And wearily went Colan's hands
That swung King Alfred's sword.

But like a cloud of evening
To westward easily,
Tall Eldred broke the sea of spears
As a tall ship breaks the sea.

A Gleaming Cohort

His face like a sanguine sunset,
 His shoulder a Wessex down,
His hand like a windy hammer-stroke;
Men could not count the crests he broke,
 So fast the crests went down.

As the tall white devil of the Plague
 Moves out of Asian skies,
With his foot on a waste of cities
 And his head in a cloud of flies;

Or purple and peacock skies grow dark
 With a moving locust-tower;
Or tawny sand-winds tall and dry,
Like hell's red banners beat and fly,
When death comes out of Araby,
 Was Eldred in his hour.

But while he moved like a massacre
 He murmured as in sleep,
And his words were all of low hedges
 And little fields and sheep.

Even as he strode like a pestilence,
 That strides from Rhine to Rome,
He thought how tall his beans might be
 If ever he went home.

Spoke some stiff piece of childish prayer,
 Dull as the distant chimes,
That thanked our God for good eating
 And corn and quiet times—

Till on the helm of a high chief
 Fell shatteringly his brand,
And the helm broke and the bone broke
 And the sword broke in his hand.

Then from the yelling Northmen
 Driven splintering on him ran
Full seven spears, and the seventh
 Was never made by man.

Seven spears, and the seventh
 Was wrought as the faerie blades,
And given to Elf the minstrel
 By the monstrous water-maids;

By them that dwell where luridly
 Lost waters of the Rhine
Move among roots of nations,
 Being sunken for a sign.

Under all graves they murmur,
 They murmur and rebel,
Down to the buried kingdoms creep,
And like a lost rain roar and weep
 O'er the red heavens of hell.

Thrice drowned was Elf the minstrel,
 And washed as dead on sand;
And the third time men found him
 The spear was in his hand.

Seven spears went about Eldred,
 Like stays about a mast;
But there was sorrow by the sea
 For the driving of the last.

Six spears thrust upon Eldred
 Were splintered while he laughed;
One spear thrust into Eldred,
 Three feet of blade and shaft.

And from the great heart grievously
 Came forth the shaft and blade,
And he stood with the face of a dead man,
 Stood a little, and swayed—

A Gleaming Cohort

Then fell, as falls a battle-tower,
 On smashed and struggling spears,
Cast down from some unconquered town
That, rushing earthward, carries down
Loads of live men of all renown—
 Archers and engineers.

And a great clamour of Christian men
 Went up in agony,
Crying, " Fallen is the tower of Wessex
 That stood beside the sea."

Centre and right the Wessex guard
 Grew pale for doubt and fear,
And the flank failed at the advance,
For the death-light on the wizard lance—
 The star of the evil spear.

" Stand like an oak," cried Marcus,
 " Stand like a Roman wall !
Eldred the Good is fallen—
 Are you too good to fall ?

" When we were wan and bloodless
 He-gave you ale enow ;
The pirates deal with him as dung,
 God ! are you bloodless now ? "

" Grip, Wulf and Gorlias, grip the ash !
 Slaves, and I make you free !
Stamp, Hildred hard in English land,
Stand Gurth, stand Gorlias, Gawen stand !
Hold, Halfgar, with the other hand,
 Halmer, hold up on knee !

Ballad of the White Horse

" The lamps are dying in your homes,
The fruits upon your bough ;
Even now your old thatch smoulders, Gurth,
Now is the judgment of the earth,
Now is the death-grip, now ! "

For thunder of the captain,
Not less the Wessex line,
Leaned back and reeled a space to rear
As Elf charged with the Rhine maids' spear,
And roaring like the Rhine.

For the men were borne by the waving walls
Of woods and clouds that pass,
By dizzy plain and drifting sea,
And they mixed God with glamoury,
God with the gods of the burning tree
And the wizard's tower and glass.

But Mark was come of the glittering towns
Where hot white details show,
Where men can number and expound,
And his faith grew in a hard ground
Of doubt and reason and falsehood found,
Where no faith else could grow.

Belief that grew of all beliefs
One moment back was blown
And belief that stood on unbelief
Stood up iron and alone.

The Wessex crescent backwards
Crushed, as with bloody spear
Went Elf roaring and routing,
And Mark against Elf yet shouting,
Shocked, in his mid-career.

A Gleaming Cohort

Right on the Roman shield and sword
 Did spear of the Rhine maids run;
But the shield shifted never,
The sword rang down to sever,
The great Rhine sang for ever,
 And the songs of Elf were done.

And a great thunder of Christian men
 Went up against the sky,
Saying, "God hath broken the evil spear
 Ere the good man's blood was dry."

"Spears at the charge!" yelled Mark amain.
 "Death on the gods of death!
Over the thrones of doom and blood
Goeth God that is a craftsman good,
And gold and iron, earth and wood,
 Loveth and laboureth.

"The fruits leap up in all your farms,
 The lamps in each abode;
God of all good things done on earth,
All wheels or webs of any worth,
The God that makes the roof, Gurth,
 The God that makes the road.

"The God that heweth kings in oak
 Writeth songs on vellum,
God of gold and flaming glass,
Confregit potentias
Arcuum, scutum, Gorlias,
 Gladium et bellum."

Steel and lightning broke about him,
 Battle-bays and palm,
All the sea-kings swayed among
Woods of the Wessex arms upflung,
The trumpet of the Roman tongue,
 The thunder of the psalm.

And midmost of that rolling field
 Ran Ogier ragingly,
Lashing at Mark, who turned his blow,
And brake the helm about his brow,
 And broke him to his knee.

Then Ogier heaved over his head
 His huge round shield of proof;
But Mark set one foot on the shield,
One on some sundered rock upheeled,
And towered above the tossing field,
 A statue on a roof.

Dealing far blows about the fight,
 Like thunder-bolts a-roam,
Like birds about the battle-field,
While Ogier writhed under his shield
 Like a tortoise in his dome.

But hate in the buried Ogier
 Was strong as pain in hell,
With bare brute hand from the inside
He burst the shield of brass and hide,
And a death-stroke to the Roman's side
 Sent suddenly and well.

Then the great statue on the shield
 Looked his last look around
With level and imperial eye;
And Mark, the man from Italy,
Fell in the sea of agony,
 And died without a sound.

And Ogier, leaping up alive,
 Hurled his huge shield away
Flying, as when a juggler flings
 A whizzing plate in play.

A Gleaming Cohort

And held two arms up rigidly,
And roared to all the Danes:
"Fallen is Rome, yea, fallen
The city of the plains!

"Shall no man born remember,
That breaketh wood or weald,
How long she stood on the roof of the world
As he stood on my shield.

"The new wild world forgetteth her
As foam fades on the sea,
How long she stood with her foot on Man
As he with his foot on me.

"No more shall the brown men of the south
Move like the ants in lines,
To quiet men with olives
Or madden men with vines.

"No more shall the white towns of the south,
Where Tiber and Nilus run,
Sitting around a secret sea
Worship a secret sun.

"The blind gods roar for Rome fallen,
And forum and garland gone,
For the ice of the north is broken,
And the sea of the north comes on.

"The blind gods roar and rave and dream
Of all cities under the sea,
For the heart of the north is broken,
And the blood of the north is free.

Ballad of the White Horse

" Down from the dome of the world we come,
 Rivers on rivers down,
Under us swirl the sects and hordes
 And the high dooms we drown.

" Down from the dome of the world and down,
 Struck flying as a skiff
On a river in spate is spun and swirled
Until we come to the end of the world
 That breaks short, like a cliff.

" And when we come to the end of the world
 For me, I count it fit
To take the leap like a good river,
 Shot shrieking over it.

" But whatso hap at the end of the world,
 Where Nothing is struck and sounds,
It is not, by Thor, these monkish men
 These humbled Wessex hounds—

" Not this pale line of Christian hinds,
 This one white string of men,
Shall keep us back from the end of the world,
 And the things that happen then.

" It is not Alfred's dwarfish sword,
 Nor Egbert's pigmy crown,
Shall stay us now that descend in thunder,
Rending the realms and the realms thereunder,
 Down through the world and down."

There was that in the wild men back of him,
 There was that in his own wild song,
A dizzy throbbing, a drunkard smoke,
That dazed to death all Wessex folk,
 And swept their spears along.

A Gleaming Cohort

Vainly the sword of Colan
 And the axe of Alfred plied—
The Danes poured in like a brainless plague,
 And knew not when they died.

Prince Colan slew a score of them,
 And was stricken to his knee;
King Alfred slew a score and seven
 And was borne back on a tree.

Back to the black gate of the woods,
 Back up the single way,
Back by the place of the parting ways
 Christ's knights were whirled away.

And when they came to the parting ways
 Doom's heaviest hammer fell,
For the King was beaten, blind, at bay,
Down the right lane with his array,
But Colan swept the other way,
 Where he smote great strokes and fell.

The thorn-woods over Ethandune
 Stand sharp and thick as spears,
By night and furze and forest-harms
Far sundered were the friends in arms;
The loud lost blows, the last alarms,
 Came not to Alfred's ears.

The thorn-woods over Ethandune
 Stand stiff as spikes in mail;
As to the Haut King came at morn
Dead Roland on a doubtful horn,
Seemed unto Alfred lightly borne
 The last cry of the Gael.

XXXVI. Who Goes Home?

"In the city set upon slime and loam
They cry in their parliament 'Who goes home?'
And there comes no answer in arch or dome,
For none in the city of graves goes home.
Yet these shall perish and understand,
For God has pity on this great land.
Men that are men again; who goes home?
Tocsin and trumpeter! Who goes home?
For there's blood on the field and blood on the foam
And blood on the body when Man goes home.
And a voice valedictory. . . . Who is for Victory?
Who is for Liberty? Who goes home?"

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